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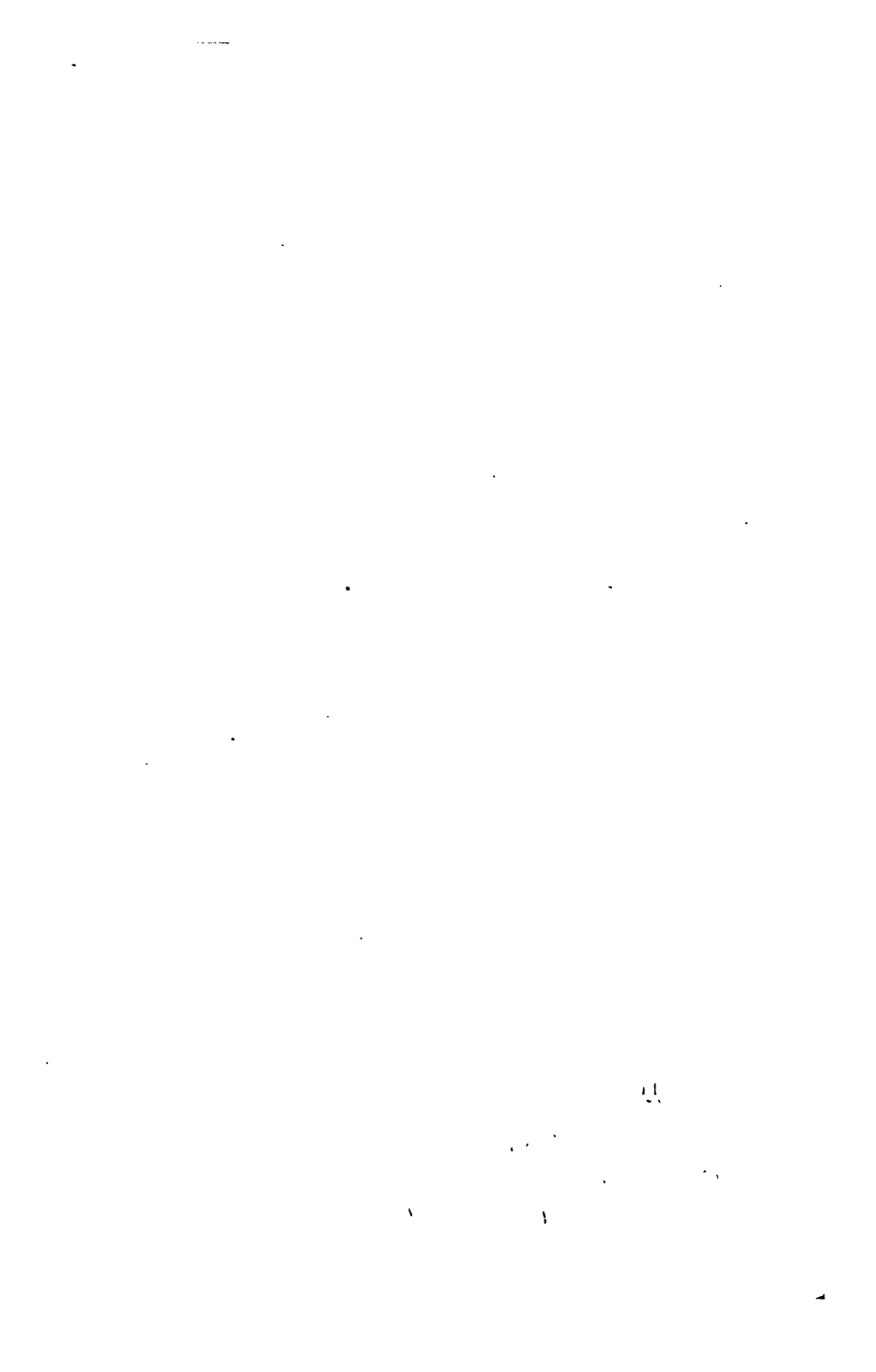
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1918

MUSICOGRAPHY



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THE NEW OPERA GLASS

CONTAINING

THE PLOTS OF THE POPULAR OPERAS

AND

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE COMPOSERS

BY

JOHN E. BARKER

WITH A PORTRAIT OF RICHARD WAGNER.



LEIPZIG

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1887.

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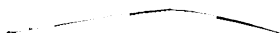
PREFACE.

FOR a long time the English and Americans residing on the continent have felt the want of a work, which contains the plots of the popular operas of modern times. This want is supplied by this book, for it contains not only the old classical works, but also the works which govern the Repertoire of the opera of the present day, the creations of Richard Wagner especially have been worked out with great care. Three operas "The Taming of the shrew" by Goetz, "Romeo and Juliet" by Gounod and "Othello" by Verdi, which are frequently given have not been noticed, the plot being strictly the same as Shakespeare's homonymous dramas.

May this little book be favourably received, and prove a welcome guide to every visitor of the opera in order to heighten the charm, when he is enjoying the sublime creations of a Wagner or a Mozart.

LEIPZIG, November 1886.

JOHN E. BARKER.





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Adolphe Charles Adam.

B. July 24th 1803 as the son of a French musician and professor of the conservatory at Paris. In 1817 he attended the conservatory of his native town, where he was instructed by Boieldieu. His first work was "Pierre and Cathérine". In 1836 he published his second opera: "The Post-boy of Longjumeau", which was very favourably received and acquired for him a name as a musical writer. 1836 to 1846 he composed ten other operas; the best of these is the "Brewer of Preston". In 1848 he was appointed professor of the conservatory at Paris, where he died May 3^d 1856.

The Post-boy of Longjumeau.

Chapelon, a post-boy of Longjumeau, had just returned from church, where he had been married to Magdalen. During the festival he sings some songs, which are heard by the intendant of the Royal Opera in Paris, the marquis of Corey, who is in search of a new tenor. The Marquis is highly pleased with the post-boy's voice and persuades him to follow him to Paris. Chapelon perfidiously leaves his wife and soon becomes a great favourite of the Parisian public. Here he lives under the assumed name of St. Phar.

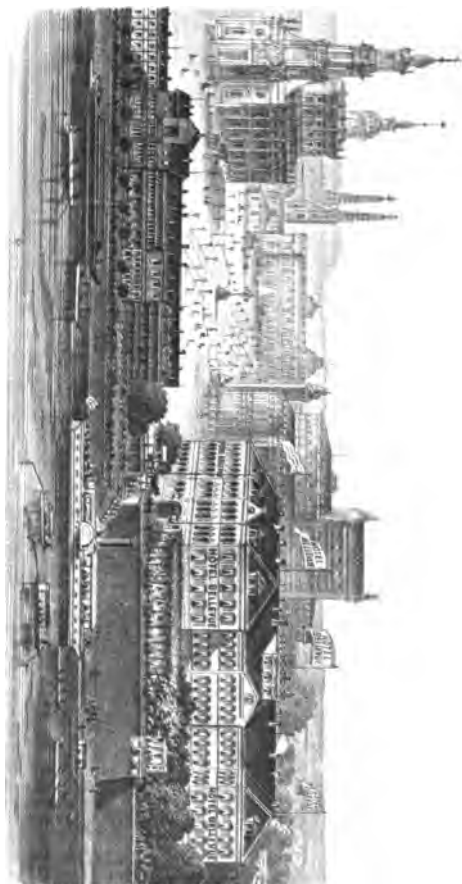
His wife has in the meantime inherited a great deal of money from a rich old aunt and comes to Paris, searching for her husband. Under the assumed name of Lady Latour she succeeds in fascinating her faithless husband, who intends to marry her. St. Phar orders one of the leaders of the chorus disguised as a priest to perform the nuptial ceremony, but for some reason the latter is imprisoned and a real priest marries man and wife for a second time. When St. Phar is informed, that the marriage is legal, he is frightened, for bigamy at that time was punished with death. Lady Latour, after having teased him, and he is about to be imprisoned, clears up the whole affair by declaring she is Magdalen, his first wife.



Daniel François Esprit Auber.

B. Jan. 29th 1784 in Caen. He received his musical education from Cherubini. In 1842 he succeeded his master as conductor of the Conservatory at Paris. Under the reign of Lewis-Philip, as well as that of Napoleon III., he occupied a place as conductor of the Royal-chapel. In his 85th year he composed his last opera. His best work is "The Mute of Portici" (1828), which has been performed on every stage in Europe. He wrote about forty operas in the same number of years. Many of these are now entirely forgotten. "Fra Diavolo", "The Black Domino", "Mason and Locksmith" and "Carlo Broschi" are still favourites of the musical public. D. May 13th 1871.

The Mute of Portici.



HOTEL BELLEVUE

DRESDEN.



Dresden, den

His wife has in the meantime inherited a great deal

The Mute of Portici.

Masaniello, a Neapolitan fisherman, who has been brooding for some time over the cruel oppressions of his country, succeeds in organising a revolution against the Viceroy. This revolution at last breaks out, after the son of the Viceroy Alphonso has succeeded in betraying Fenella, the mute sister of Masaniello. The people are victorious, but commit great cruelties, which Masaniello tries to stop, but in vain. Alphonso, pursued by the enraged people, implores Masaniello to protect himself and his wife. The protection is granted him, and even kept, when Masaniello recognises him as his mortal enemy. He is proclaimed king and led in triumph to the viceroy's palace, where he is presented with the Royal insignia. While Vesuvius is in a state of eruption, the news is spread that the Spaniards are returning with strengthened forces. Masaniello aroused by Fenella, takes the lead of the fishermen, but he is killed in the battle, and the fishermen are dispersed. Fenella in despair leaps from the terrace into the burning lava, as it comes streaming from the volcano.

The Black Domino.

Horace of Massarena, a poor Spanish nobleman, had received an offer from a wealthy nobleman to marry his daughter. He would have gladly accepted this noble offer, but his mind is fascinated by the recollection of a Lady in a black domino, whom he had met at a ball given by the Queen of Spain on New Year's Eve. By a happy accident, he meets at another ball his idolized unknown beauty again, but endeavours in vain to discover her identity. In reality,

she is of a very high family, and member of a convent, where she is preparing to become a Lady Abbess. In order to discover the mystery, which surrounds her, Horace and his friend, the count Julianio, succeed in separating Angela from her female companion. This deprives the latter of the means of returning home. Refusing with indignation the attendance of the two friends, she comes by chance to the house of Count Julianio, who has invited some friends to come to him after the ball. Angela bribing Claudia, the house-keeper, obtains a refuge for the night. The guests arrive, and Angela, who runs the risk of being discovered, succeeds in baffling Perez, the porter of the convent, who was secretly visiting Claudia. She obtains the keys of the convent and withdraws triumphantly. Horace at last discovers to his great amazement, his beloved Angela in the person of the Lady Abbess. However by the Queen's intervention she is released from her vows, and becomes the wife of the happy Horace.

Fra Diavolo.

Fra Diavolo, a much dreaded Italian brigand and his band, have plundered a rich Englishman and his wife. Lord Rochburg, who nevertheless had contrived to save a good deal of his money, arrives at Terracina and meets here at the inn of a certain Matteo, a Marquis of San Marco, who is the disguised Fra Diavolo. Zerlina, the daughter of Matteo loves Lorenzo, a captain of dragoons, who is about to follow the gang of robbers, to gain the price of 1000 ducats, which Lord Rochburg has promised for the recovering of his

property. For Lorenzo is poor, and Matteo intends to marry his daughter to a rich farmer. Lorenzo succeeds, and after having killed twenty of the robbers he gains the promised reward. But Fra Diavolo vowing vengeance on Lorenzo, conceals himself in Zerlina's bedroom. By accident, the Lord and Lorenzo enter the room. Fra Diavolo surprised declares to the Lord that his Lady has appointed him to come, and to Lorenzo, that Zerline has invited him. Lorenzo challenges the Marquis and a duel is arranged. Fra Diavolo intends to play a capital trick with the rest of his gang. But by the incautiousness of two of his band he is caught in his own trap by Lorenzo. The robbers are conveyed to prison and Lorenzo marries Zerline amidst the rejoicings of the inhabitants.

Mason and Blacksmith.

Roger, a mason, on the evening of his wedding-day is surprised by two strangers, who compel him by bribes and threats, to suffer himself to be blindfolded and go with them to undertake a job, which must be finished that very night. He is led to the seraglio of the Turkish ambassador, where a young Greek Irma, the favourite of Abdallah, has given a secret meeting to a French officer and has planned to escape with him. Abdallah, who has found out this plan, has already taken his measures. Scarcely has his rival Merinville thrown himself into the arms of his beloved and is going to escape with her, when both are surrounded and fettered. They are thrown into a grotto, the gate of which the mason is ordered to close up. In order to return as quickly as possible to his wife, he hastens

to finish his work, but first gives a secret look into the grotto and recognises in the French officer the benefactor, by whose kindness he has been enabled to celebrate his wedding; but as he is strictly guarded, he can only inform the prisoners that a friend is near by singing the verse of a song, which is also known to Merinville. Meanwhile the mason's young wife, who is in despair and jealous at the mysterious disappearance of her husband, has spent the night watching for his return. On the following morning she is provoked by the wife of Bertrand, her neighbour, who, envious of the good fortune of the young couple slanders her husband and tries to excite her jealousy still further. At last Roger returns and as he has been again blindfolded on his way home, he cannot tell, where he has spent the night, in consequence, ardently as he wishes to save the lovers, is unable for this reason to do so. Wrapt in thoughts, he scarcely hears the reproaches of his wife, but becomes more attentive, when she informs him that she knows very well where he has been, for her neighbour had seen him driving to the Turkish Embassy. This clears up all and now Roger hastens to save the lovers, who have been imprisoned against the laws; he releases them by order of the magistrate and returning with them in triumph to his house clears up the doubts of his jealous wife.



Ludwig van Beethoven.

B. Dec. 16th 1770 at Bonn, is decidedly the most important of all German composers. As a boy of five

years he commenced his musical education under his father, and later continued it under Haydn. In his thirteenth year his musical compositions excited the admiration of the most accomplished musicians of his time. In his fourteenth year he became organist at the court of the Elector of Cologne. 1792 he was sent to Vienna to hear the musical lectures of Haydn. Here he was greatly honoured and received into the highest circles on account of his masterly playing on the piano. He lived in the village of Mœdling near Vienna until his death. The last twenty years of his life he was deaf, but notwithstanding this misfortune, these years were very productive. He died March 26th 1827. The only opera he ever composed, is "Fidelio", but he has bequeathed to posterity a noble monument of his industry and genius in his brilliant compositions.

Fidelio.

Florestan, a Spanish nobleman, who had dared to provoke the all powerful and tyrannical Pizarro, the Governor of a Stateprison, is ordered by the latter to be thrown into a dungeon and condemned to die of hunger by being gradually deprived of food. But Florestan has a faithful wife Leonore, who undertakes to save him from this terrible fate. In male attire and under the name of Fidelio, she succeeds in gaining admission into the fortress, by entering the service of Rocco, the jailer. The beautiful youth soon wins not only the affection of the jailer but also that of his daughter Marcellina to the great annoyance of Giaquino, the porter, and her former lover. Fidelio implores Rocco

to take him in the capacity of assistant jailer and in this endeavour he is assisted by Marcellina. Rocco consents and only awaits the arrival of the Governor to obtain permission to do so. When Pizarro arrives, a letter is handed to him, which tells him of a visit from the Minister, who has been informed, that Pizarro has several victims of his despotism concealed here. The dread of being discovered induces Pizarro to make away with Florestan at once, but the honourable Rocco indignantly refuses to carry out this order. Now Pizarro resolves to accomplish the dreadful act himself, and causes Rocco and Fidelio to dig the grave for Florestan. The second act represents the dungeon, where Florestan is chained to a stone. His torments are a little lightened, for he seems to see as in a dream his beloved wife. During his swoon Rocco and Fidelio enter. Leonore recognising her husband is quite overcome with emotion. While digging the grave she obtains Rocco's permission to give the poor prisoner a piece of bread, which the latter swallows with avidity.

Pizarro now appears and just as he is about to slay his victim, Fidelio throws herself between Florestan with a piercing shriek and directs a pistol at Pizarro's head.

All at once the sound of trumpets is heard. Pizarro is summoned into the presence of the Minister, who dismisses the cruel Governor, and causes Leonore to remove with her own hands the chains of her husband.

Vincenzo Bellini,

a distinguished musical composer.

B. Nov. 3^d 1802 at Catania in Sicily, attended the Conservatory in Naples in 1819, where he was a pupil of Tritto and Zingarelli. His opera "The Pirate", which he produced at Milano 1828, raised high expectations in those who heard it.

This was followed by "Montecchi and Capuletti", "La Sonambula" and "Norma", which were received with the utmost enthusiasm. D. Sept. 22nd 1835 at Pateaux near Paris, where he had lived since 1833. Here he finished "I Puritani" one of his most brilliant efforts.

Norma.

Pollio, the Roman Governor of Gaul, is attached to Norma, the Gaulish high-priestess, who is regarded with great veneration by the people as the oracle through whom the deity conveys his divine decrees. The fruit of this attachment is the birth of two children. Clotilda, the friend of Norma, only knows of her faithlessness to her sacred vows. Pollio however has fallen in love with Adalgisa, a priestess of the Irminpillar, who reciprocates the love of the faithless Roman, and consents to fly with him to Rome. Filled with scruples and remorse at the step she is about to take, she makes a confidant of Norma, who now learns the shameful perfidity of Pollio.

In the second act Norma still bursting with jealous rage resolves to murder her two children. The maternal feeling however triumphs and she calls Clotilda

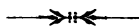
to take them away. Then sending for Adalgisa she implores her to take charge of them, as without Pollio's love she cannot live. Adalgisa soothes her by promising to bring back Pollio. Her entreaties with the latter are in vain, for he even forces his way into the temple Irmin to carry off Adalgisa. Seized in the act by the Gauls, he is brought as a prisoner before Norma, to receive the punishment he merits for this unheard of outrage.

Norma condemns him to death, and with him a priestess, who has betrayed the Gods of the nation and dishonoured their altars. When the name of the priestess is demanded, she denounces herself. Overcome by such magnanimity and devotion, Pollio begs Norma to restore him to her love—but too late. Both ascend the funeral pile, recommending their children to the care of the arch-druid, Norma's father.

The Somnambulist.

Amina, a poor orphan, is on the point of wedding Elvino, a wealthy farmer. When the nuptial ceremony is about to be celebrated, count Rudolph enters whose attention to Amina excites the jealousy of the bridegroom. In the next scene the bed-room of the Count is seen, where he has an interview with Lisa, the landlady, the latter having arranged this rendez-vous with the view of calumniating Amina. Whilst they are speaking, a figure in white is seen upon the balcony. The Count recognises Amina walking in her sleep. The latter, after the inhabitants had been aroused by Lisa, is found by Elvino in this delicate situation. Her protestations of innocence joined with the Count's

who espouses her cause are in vain. She is cruelly abandoned by Elvino. But her innocence is soon proved, for on his way to church, Elvino sees Amina suddenly coming from the window of a mill and taking a perilous walk across a narrow bridge. While still in a state of somnambulism, she expresses her love for Elvino to some friends she meets. Convinced now of the injustice he has done her, he replaces on her finger the ring he had taken from her in anger. Amid the congratulations of all, the lovers are reunited.



George Bizet.

B. Nov. 25th 1838 at Paris, was a pupil of Halévy and later his son-in-law. He is an important French composer of the 19th century. His fame was founded by his last opera "*Carmen*" which is very popular, especially in Germany. In France another of his operas "*Numa*" is much liked. He died June 3^d 1875.

Carmen.

Carmen, a gipsy of wild and lively character, at first bewitches the hearts of men and then disdainfully repulses them, but this finally ends in a tragedy. She has distinguished her first lover Don José, a brigadier in the Spanish army, by giving him a bunch of flowers. José is fascinated by her beauty, but is released from her charms by the arrival of Micaela, his affianced bride, who brings him news from his old mother. Just when Micaela has left him Don José

is sent by his officer to enquire the cause of an uproar that is heard in a manufactory. He returns with Carmen as a prisoner, who has stabbed another girl in a quarrel. Don José is ordered to fetter her, but she persuades him to let her escape. The love-stricken brigadier grants her wish, and she promises him a meeting at the tavern of Lilla Pastia, where gipsies and smugglers are accustomed to meet. Don José has been imprisoned for his breach of orders and when he is released, he goes in search of Carmen, who, in the meanwhile, has fallen in love with Escamillo, a Torreador. Don José after having met Carmen, does not return to his regiment, partly out of love, partly from jealousy and thus becomes a deserter. He follows Carmen, who goes with some other gipsies and smugglers to the mountains. Don José's jealousy is roused, because Escamillo invites Carmen, to be present at the bull-fight, in which he is to take a part. In the meantime, Don José's bride has found him and tries to make him return to his old mother. Moved by her prayers, he leaves Carmen, but intends to watch her, whom he suspects faithless. The bull-fight had begun, when he meets Carmen in the circus. He tries to win back her old love, but she, in return, throws his ring at his feet. Don José in a fit of frenzy, stabs her, just at the moment, when the victorious Escamillo is returning from the arena.



Andrien François Boildieu.

B. Dec. 15th 1775 at Rouen. At the age of nineteen he went to Paris, where he earned his bread by composing and giving lessons on the piano. Some good compositions gained for him the place of professor at the Conservatory at Paris in 1779. In 1803 he went to St. Petersburg, where he was appointed master of the Imperial Chapel. In 1812 he returned to Paris and became conductor of the conservatory in 1817. He died at Jarcy 1834. His best opera is "The Lady in White" which, together with "John of Paris", have been performed on every stage in Europe. His other works are: "Kalif of Bagdad," "The new Landlord," "Red-cap" and "The Two Nights".

The Lady in White.

The Lord of Avenel had been exiled for espousing the cause of the Stuarts. He left his castle in charge of Gaveston, his steward, and also confided to him, that a considerable treasure was concealed in a statue called the "White Lady". The latter was reported to be the benevolent genius of the Lords of Avenel, exercising a protecting influence over their possessions. Though the Lady is reported to have been seen by many of the villagers, wandering about in the old castle, Gaveston does not believe in this marvellous personage, and in spite of her influence, he announces the sale of the castle, which he hopes to obtain at a low price, not thinking that any one in the impoverished neighbourhood, would be able to outbid him.

Just then George Brown, a young officer arrives. He is no other than the son of the Lord of Avenel, of whom no tidings had been heard for more than ten years. He is hospitably received by Dickson, a farmer. Anna, the ward of Gaveston recognises the young officer as the beloved companion of her youth. Informed of the vile intentions of Gaveston, she determines to frustrate his schemes. Profiting by the common report of the White Lady, she appears to George, and persuades him to be present at the public sale. George follows her advice. He outbids the infuriated steward and the estate is adjudged to him at the enormous price of £ 300,000, which he must pay within 24 hours.

Wandering through the halls of his ancestors and hearing the home-like songs of the peasants, who are rendering homage to their new master, old dreams of youth are aroused within him.

But now the judge arrives to receive the purchase-money. George almost in despair, is saved by the intervention of the "White Lady" who appears at the proper moment producing a box, which contains the treasure of the Count and also the documents which prove the claims of Edwin. Gaveston in a rage tears the veil from the pretended spectre and discovers Anna his ward.

As a matter of course, the new made Lord offers her his hand and heart.



Ignaz Brüll.

B. Nov. 7th 1846 at Prossnitz (Moravia), received his musical education in Vienna, where he still lives. His opera "The Gold Cross" is the most popular, "The Beggar of Samarkand" and "Bianca" are also great favourites. He is not only a musical composer but also a distinguished pianist.

The Gold Cross.

Nicolas Pariset, an inn-keeper, is on the point of marrying Therese, his cousin. He has a sister Christine, who loves him with all her heart. When the nuptial ceremony is about to take place, the Sergeant, Bombardon arrives, who levies Nicolas for the Grand Army against Russia. All the remonstrances of his bride and sister are in vain and he is about to depart, when Christine takes the heroic resolution to sacrifice her own happiness for that of her brother. She declares she will marry whoever will go as a substitute for her brother, and as a pledge of this promise, she places a gold cross in the hands of Bombardon. Her offer is accepted by Gontran, a young nobleman, whose heart had been moved by such self-sacrificing tenderness and devotion. The marriage between Therese and Nicolas closes the first act. Two years later a wounded soldier is brought to Nicola's house, where he is nursed by Christine. He is no other than Gontran, returning from the Russian war. Both are mutually in love with the other, but as no declaration has been made, Gontran is on the point of leaving her in

two enemies takes place. The second act reveals the perfidy of Norman, Henry Ashton's steward, who forges a letter, which contains the news of Edgar's infidelity. Henry, whose life is menaced by political troubles, implores his sister to save him by marrying Lord Arthur Bucklow. She consents, and Edgar just arrives, when the marriage-ceremony is taking place. Seeing himself as he thinks deceived, he returns Lucy the pledge, at the same time pronouncing a deadly curse on her whole race.

In the third act Raymond announces, that Lucy in a fit of madness has murdered her husband. Edgar, on hearing this news, also terminates his life, and with dying breath he prays, being permitted, to meet Lucy in an other world.

The Daughter of the Regiment.

Sulpizio, a sergeant of the grand army of Napoleon, has found an infant on the field of battle and taking a fancy to the child, he persuades the regiment, to adopt the girl, who then goes by the name of the daughter of the regiment. She grows up to woman-hood, performing the duties of a Vivandière. On the person of the child had been affixed a letter from her father, a Captain, addressed to the Marchioness of Birkenfeld. At the opening of the opera Maria has become enamoured of Tonio, a Tyrolese, who has rescued her, from impending death, when in danger of falling down a precipice. Tonio, after having gained her consent, asks her hand from the regiment. The latter in its paternal character, consents to the match on condition of Tonio joining their ranks. All might have gone well, but the

Marchioness of Birkenfeld appears and claims Maria, declaring, that the Captain was the husband of her sister. She takes her from the regiment, leaving Tonio in despair; for he is considered by the Marchioness as wholly unsuitable to be connected with any member of her noble family. But Maria, suddenly deprived of her accustomed freedom, is not happy, and laments more deeply than ever her separation from Tonio. All at once, the sound of approaching drums announce the advance of troops. It is her old, much beloved regiment, headed by Tonio, who has been made an officer for his noble conduct. He renews his offer for Maria's hand, but the haughty Marchioness refuses, for she intends to marry her to the son of a Duke. The Marchioness hearing, that Maria has consented to elope with Tonio, reveals to her, that the Captain who fell on the field of battle was her husband and consequently Maria is her daughter. Now Maria, seeing no other expedient, complies with the wishes of her mother and renounces Tonio in despair. But this act of filial devotion awakens the maternal feelings of the Marchioness and she gives her consent to the union of Maria and Tonio.



Baron Frederick Flotow.

B. April 12th 1812 on his parents' estate at Fentendorf (Mecklenburg). His father first intended to educate him for the diplomacy, but discovering the musical talents of his son, he decided on sending him to Paris, where he studied musics under Reiche's direction. When

the French Revolution broke out 1830 he returned to Germany and composed here some pieces for the piano, but soon afterwards returned to Paris. In 1855 he became Intendant of the Court-theatre at Schwerin. The best of his operas are *Stradella* (1844) and *Martha* (1846).

Martha.

Lady Durham, disgusted with court-life, disguises herself as a peasant and with her friend Nancy, who is also disguised, they join some girls, who are going to Richmond to seek employment. Under the assumed names of Martha and Betsy, both ladies are hired in the presence of the sheriff by two young farmers, Lionel and Plumkett, who fall in love with them and openly confess their love. Now they resolve to fly and are assisted by Lord Tristan of Michleford, who, disguised as a servant, is waiting for them with a coach. They make their escape and leave nothing behind, save a terrible remembrance—at least to Lionel, who is nearly driven to despair by the loss of the pretended Martha. When he meets the lady again, she has reassumed her own rank, and in the presence of the assembled court, he tells of the deception, but is supposed to have lost his senses and is sent to Bedlam.

Lionel however possesses a ring, which he had received from his father on his death-bed, telling him to send it to the Queen, if he should ever be in any great danger. By this ring, he is discovered to be the son of Lord Derby, who had been innocently exiled. Replaced in his proper rank as the son of a peer, he gains the affection and hand of Lady Durham.

Plumkett marries Betsy at the same time, and all ends happily.

Stradella.

Stradella, a celebrated Italian singer, carries off Leonore, who is jealously watched by Bassi her guardian. The young couple take refuge in a lovely village in the neighbourhood of Rome, where they lead a retired, but happy life. This happiness however is of short duration. Bassi succeeds in discovering their abode and hires two bandits to murder Stradella. Under the pretext of seeking a shelter for the night, they are hospitably received by Stradella, who treats them in such a generous manner, that their better feelings are roused, and they renounce their plan of assassinating him. At this moment Bassi arrives, who excites their covetousness to such a degree, that they resolve to execute their bloody design. Just on the point of stabbing their victim, Stradella sings a hymn, the subject of which is, the mercy of the Holy Virgin towards penitent sinners, in such a touching and overpowering manner, that both the assassins throw away their weapons, and beg Stradella's forgiveness. A reconciliation of the two opponents takes place, while the singer is carried off by the people in triumph, in order to celebrate the festival of the Holy Virgin.

**Christoph Wilibaldus Gluck.**

The son of a forest-ranger, was born July 2^d 1714 at Weidenwang near Neumarkt (Palatinate). In spite of his parent's poverty he received a good education. From Prague, where he first studied music, he went to

Italy, taking lessons in composition from Martini. Having returned to Austria, he began his great reformation of operatic music; for with his operas begins a new aera. In 1774 he went to Paris to assist at the first representation of his new operas "Armida", "Iphigenia in Aulis" and "Alceste". These pieces were performed with such applause, that he obtained a pension. In 1787 he returned to Germany, where he died in the same year on the 15th of Nov. His influence over the sphere of music is most important and he has obtained a great name as the reformer of the opera.

Armida.

Armida, a well known sorceress, whose charms had inflamed the hearts of all men, goes alone to the camp of the Crusaders at the request of her uncle Hidroat the King of Damascus. She succeeds in seducing several of the most valiant knights by means of her captivating beauty, who following her to Damascus, are rescued by Rinald, one of the bravest knights of the Crusaders. Rinald himself however falls into the power of Armida, who is really in love with the fair youth and carries him off to her enchanted gardens at Antioch. Rinald sinks into indolence and all kinds of sensual pleasures. In the meantime Godfrey of Bouillon has sent two knights, who try to rescue Rinald from the seductive charms of Armida.

They succeed in rousing the better feelings of honour and military glory in him, and he resolves to return to his army. In vain are the entreaties of Armida. He basely leaves her, and Armida in wild

despair curses the faithless one and changes the brilliant palace with its marvellous gardens into a desolate wilderness.



Charles Goldmarck.

B. May 18th 1832 at Kestzthely in Hungary; now living in Vienna. His operas are: "The Queen of Sheba", "The Foreigner", "Attila" and "A country Wedding". The most popular of these is "The Queen of Sheba."

The Queen of Sheba.

Sulamith, the daughter of the High-priest, is expecting the return of Assad, her betrothed, whom King Solomon has sent to Arabia to invite the Queen of Sheba to his court. Suddenly Assad enters with a troubled mien announcing the expected arrival of the Queen and is just going to retire without having cast a glance at Sulamith. But he is asked by Solomon the reason of his strange conduct. With trembling voice he tells the King the following adventure: Once lying on the ground in the forest of Libanon, he saw rising from the river, the figure of a woman of heavenly beauty. Enraptured, he pressed her in his arms for a few moments, when suddenly she disappeared.

Solomon, thinking this story the plaything of his imagination, advises him to proceed at once with his bride to the high-altar. Now follows the pompous entrance of the Queen of Sheba. The wonder-stricken Assad recognises in her the woman, whom he had

embraced a short time ago. No longer master of himself, he rushes to her but is indignantly repulsed by the Queen. In the second act the Queen is discovered in the garden of the palace. She is sighing for Assad, the first hero, who had conquered her heart. Astaroth, her slave, announces Assad's arrival and they mutually acknowledge their love. In the next scene the temple is represented where every thing is prepared for the nuptial ceremony. The betrothed couple enter, and just, when they are going to exchange rings the Queen appears bringing a wedding present for the bride. Assad in the greatest agitation rushes towards the Queen to tear the veil from her face. Disowned by the Queen, he is sentenced to death for his unheard of transgression of the divine laws but Solomon declares himself his judge. A gorgeous festival is celebrated by Solomon in honour of his royal guest. The Queen begging as a favour the life of Assad is repulsed by the King, who at last has found out her deceit. In the fourth act Assad is discovered in a desert heart-broken; the Queen appears, and in vain endeavours to allure him again with her charms. He curses his seducer, and resolves to submit to the justice of God. Dying he is united with Sulamith, who likewise expires over his body.



Charles François Gounod.

B. June 17th 1818 at Paris. Already as a boy he showed great signs of musical talent. His musical education commenced at the conservatory at Paris

and afterwards he went to Italy to study the old classical music, where he filled the place of chapel-master in the church of Foreign Missions. 1852, he was appointed head-master of the Singing Academy Orpheon, and in 1857 decorated with the Cross of the Legion of honour. Later he left Paris and went over to London, but he returned again to Paris in the autumn of 1871. His operas are "Philemon and Baucis", "Romeo and Juliet" and "Faust and Margaret". The two latter are his best and have made his name known over Europe. Recently he has composed the opera "The Tribute of Zamora" which has also met with great success.

Faust and Margaret.

Faust, a German student, induced by an insatiable desire for knowledge and disgusted with his own inability to penetrate the secrets of nature, summons Mephistopheles, the embodiment of Evil to his aid. By Mephistopheles' supernatural power, he is changed into a beautiful youth of noble appearance. In a vision, Mephistopheles reveals to him Margaret, a lovely maiden, with whom Faust instantly becomes enamoured. He gains admittance into the abode of Margaret, who had been left by Valentine, her brother, under the care of old Martha, a very unsuspecting person. The virtuous maiden at first refuses to receive the advances of Faust, but the latter at length succeeds in overcoming her scruples. Valentine returning from the war is informed of what has occurred and challenges the seducer of his sister but is slain in the encounter. With his dying breath, he curses his sister.

Margaret, whose reason has become affected at the calamity she has caused, in a moment of madness kills her child. She is thrown into prison. Faust and Mephistopheles enter her cell to persuade her to fly with them. But Margaret, in whom a holier feeling had gained the ascendancy refuses, and overpowered by grief and remorse she expires, earnestly imploring pardon for her sins. While Mephistopheles is gloating over the catastrophe he had brought about, a chorus of celestial singers is heard welcoming the repentant sinner, and her spirit is wafted upwards by angels to its everlasting rest.

The Tribute of Zamora.

Manuel Diaz, a Spanish soldier, is betrothed to Xaïma. When the nuptial ceremony is about to take place, a troop of Arabs, headed by Ben-Saïd, a delegate from the Caliph of Cordova arrives, to demand the tribute, consisting of twenty young maidens. Amongst these captives is also Xaïma, whose beauty had at first sight excited Ben-Saïd's admiration. The scene of the second act is laid in Cordova, where some Moorish soldiers are celebrating the anniversary of the battle of Zamora. Manuel, who had followed Xaïma in the disguise of a soldier of Barbary, is recognised by Hadjar, a brother of Ben-Saïd, whose life had once been saved by him. Hadjar, in return, will redeem his bride, but at the public sale of the captives he is outbidden by Ben-Saïd, who takes her triumphantly to his harem. The third act takes place in Ben-Saïd's palace. Hadjar enters with Don Manuel, whom he presents to his brother as his preserver. He

asks in his name the freedom of Xaïma. Ben-Saïd refuses, and is insulted by Don Manuel. Taken prisoner, he regains his freedom by the intercession of Xaïma on condition of his immediate departure. Now Hermosa, a mad prisoner of Ben-Saïd enters who, after having gradually recovered her reason, recognises in Xaïma her long-lost daughter. The lovers, seeing no other means of escape, have resolved to die together; when Manuel is about to strike, the weapon is snatched away by Hermosa. Ben-Saïd surprises the lovers and orders them to be separated. He renews his love-suit to Xaïma, but is interrupted by Hermosa, who demands her daughter from him. Ben-Saïd, believing her still mad, refuses and is stabbed by the desperate mother. Seized by the soldiers, she is acquitted of her crime by Hadjar on the ground of insanity.



Jacques Elie Halévy.

B. May 27th 1799 at Paris of German parents. Already in his youth he distinguished himself by his artistic playing on the piano. At the age of ten years, he entered the Conservatory at Paris, where he was directed in his musical studies by the celebrated Cherubini. In 1819 he went to Rome to study the ancient Italian church-music. In 1827 he brought out in Paris his first comic opera "The Artisan"; but this had little success. In the meantime in 1827 he was named teacher of composition, 1829 Director of the chorus of the Royal opera and 1833 Professor of composition. In

1835 he published the best opera, he ever composed, "The Jewess". Its success was immense and it was given on all the great stages in Europe. His other opera's are "The Ligthning", "The Sheriff", "Queen of Cyprus", "Charles the Sixth". He died at Nice March 17th 1862.

The Jewess.

The scene is laid at Constance during the persecution of the Jews in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Prince Leopold, a leader of the Austrian army, has fallen in love with Recha, the daughter of a rich Jew. He succeeds in entering the house of Lazarus in the character of a painter. Pretending to be of the Israelitish faith, he soon becomes a well-come guest in the jewellers house, and wins the affections of Recha. But at a festival celebrated for the recent victory of Leopold over the Hussites, his princely descent is revealed by means of a gold-chain which Eudoxia his real bride, had ordered from Lazarus. Whilst Recha is overcome with despair, the Jew curses her base seducer. The council is presided over by the Cardinal Brogni who, driven to despair by the loss of his wife and daughter, whom he supposed to have perished in the burning debris of his house, had become an ecclesiastic; he now passes the sentence of death upon father, daughter and seducer. Leopold is saved by Recha who, moved by the entreaties of Eudoxia retracts her accusation. The Cardinal also promises a pardon to Lazarus on condition of his turning Christian. He refuses, and father and daughter are dragged away to be burned alive on the same pile. At the place

of execution he asks his daughter if she will save her life by embracing the Christian faith, but Recha prefers to die with her father. She is put to death and he, triumphantly declaring, she is the long-lost daughter of the Cardinal, follows her to the stake.



Lewis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold.

B. Jan. 28th 1791 at Paris is considered a distinguished composer of modern times. In 1806 he entered the Conservatory of music at Paris, where Adam, Catel and Méhul were his instructors. 1811—13 he lived in Italy, where he continued his musical studies. Returned to France, he wrote together with Boïldieu the opera "Charles of France". In 1820 he got a situation at the Italian Opera at Paris. 1831 he published the opera "Zampa" which founded his fame and met with a good reception on all the European stages. Although ill, he still composed two other operas "The Remedy" and "The Duel" but the representation of these he did not live to see. He died Jan. 18th 1833 at Paris.

Zampa.

The marriage between Camilla, the daughter of Count Lugano and Alphonso de Mona, a young Sicilian officer, is just going to take place, when they are surprised by the pirate Zampa, who had carried off Camilla's father, and now comes hoping to obtain a large ransom for him. On seeing Camilla, he falls in love

with her, compels her, as the price of her father's liberty, to retract her promise to Alphonso and insists upon her marrying him. In his insolence he dares to put the wedding ring on the finger of the statue of Alice Manfred, whom he formerly loved and had perfidiously abandoned; but afterwards, when he is going to take it off, the statue threateningly raises the right hand. In spite of this, the terror-stricken pirate insists on Camilla accompanying him at once to the altar. At this moment Alphonso appears to rescue his betrothed, but in the terrible pirate he recognizes with terror his own brother; he is taken prisoner by the latter and the statue is thrown into the sea. Sudden darkness overspreads the scene and amidst thunder and lightning, Zampa is carried off by the statue and the lovers are united.



Edmund Kretschmar.

B. Aug. 31th 1830 at Ostritz in Saxony. He was first instructed in music by his father. In 1846 he came to Dresden to finish his studies at the Royal conservatory. In 1854 he became organist at the Royal Catholic church and was named in 1863 Court-organist. In 1874 he published his first opera, "The Folkunger" which was given in Dresden with great applause and found the same reception on all the great stages in Germany. In 1877 followed his second opera "Henry the Lion" which is not less a favourite with the public. He is still living in Dresden, where he has a large circle of admirers.

The Folkunger.

Sten Petrik the confident of Bengt, Duke of Schoonen is charged by the latter to murder Magnus, the younger son of King Erik, who by the death of his father and elder brother, has become the rightful heir to the Swedish throne. He succeeds in carrying off the young prince to the lonely cloister of Nydal; moved by pity, he spares the life of his victim but compels him by a solemn oath to renounce for ever his pretensions to the throne and to spent the rest of his days in this deserted monastery. But the arrival of Lars, the son of Karin, his nurse, who tells him, that Maria his lovely bride is going to be married against her will to the Duke Bengt of Schoonen, who in treaty with the Danes intends to take possession of Erik's crown, decides him to fly with Lars to seek a hero's death on the battle-field, preferring death to a life of indolence.

In the second act Maria is forced to accept the Duke's offer of marriage, but in her distress she is supported by the promise of Lars, who says, the people are determined to stand up in her favour against the oppressors on the Mora-stone, where the nuptial ceremony is to take place. Magnus appears and is recognized by Karin as the rightful heir to the crown; but mindful of his oath he declares Karin to be mad and taking up the Swedish banner, he rushes forth against the Danes amid the enthusiastic acclamations of the multitude. The coronation of Maria on the Mora-stone has taken place and the Queen is about to confirm the death of Magnus, when suddenly her eyes fall on the latter, who is standing in the crowd.

Recognized by Maria and Karin as Magnus, he is implored by all to confirm it by his own word, but still remembering his oath, he denies himself and is condemned by the Duke to be burnt alive as a rebel. But the infuriated populace opposes the execution and Maria claims her right as Queen to judge the criminal. He is carried off to the castle of his forefathers. Here the sight of the beloved old halls recall to his memory the dreams of his youth. Giving way to his feelings, he declares himself to be Magnus King Erik's son; Maria, who had witnessed this scene, rushes in and Magnus in a delirium of joy presses her to his bosom, but when Karin is kneeling down to do homage to him as the rightful King, he comes to his senses; and thinking himself accursed by heaven and men as a perjurer, he rushes away in despair to seek death as the only means of expiating his perjury, and flies back to the monastery of Nydal to end his life there in accordance with his oath. In the meantime, the Swedes have driven the Danes from their shores and after the Abbot Ansgar has released Magnus from his oath, the union of the latter with Maria takes place.



Konradin Kreutzer.

B. Nov. 22nd 1780 at Messkirch in Baden. He was a pupil of Albrechtsberger and in turn was chapel-master at Stuttgart, Vienna, Cologne and Riga, where he died 1849. He composed several operas the most popular of which is the "Night-camp of Granada".

The Night-camp of Granada.

The reigning prince disguised as a simple hunter, has lost his way and gets among some shepherds, who give him shelter, but lay a plan to rob and murder him. Gabriela, a beautiful young shephardess, who at first sight had won his affections, becomes his guardian-angel. With the assistance of the young shepherd Gomez, her lover, she succeeds in finding out the prince's attendants and leads them to the spot just at the moment, when the unsuspecting guest is on the point of sinking under the superior force of the treacherous shepherds.

The Prince requests his deliverer to ask for some favour as a recompense for her heroic behaviour, and she begs of him to unite her to her beloved Gomez. With noble resignation the Prince complies with her wish and then departs, followed by the blessings and prayers of the inhabitants.



Gustave Albert Lortzing.

B. Oct. 23^d 1803 at Berlin. In spite of the poverty of his parents, he received a careful musical education from the celebrated Rungenhagen and was a favourite singer and actor at Düsseldorf, Cologne, Detmold and since 1833 at Leipzig, where he became 1844 chapel-master of the City-theatre. 1846 he went to Vienna, which place he exchanged for Berlin 1850. During the latter years of his life he had to struggle with anxieties of all kinds and died at Berlin 1851 in great

poverty. He composed several operas which are universal favourites. The best known are: "The Two Riflemen", which was performed 1837 with great success. This was followed by "Czar and Carpenter" the best of his operas. "Hans Sachs" had little success but the following works "The Poacher" (1842), "Undine" (1844) and "The Armourer" have been very well received.

Undine.

Hugh of Ringsletten, a brave knight, wanders about, seeking adventures at the bidding of Berthalda, the daughter of Duke Henry, accompanied only by his faithful esquire Veit. During his wanderings, he comes to a little village, inhabited by fishermen, where he becomes enamoured of Undine, the adopted child of the fisherman Tobias. He asks her in marriage and being accepted, he takes his bride to the ducal court with the intention of presenting her to his parents. On the way Undine told her husband, that she was a water-spirit, born without a soul, and had been brought to the upper-world to receive a soul, which was given to water-spirits if they married. Both therefore are protected by powerful genii.

Berthalda, who loves Hugh, hears with anger and despair of his marriage and with the view of avenging this disgrace, she resolves to become the wife of the King of Naples. But before the nuptial-ceremony takes place, a sealed letter is opened according to the wish of the late Duke, by its contents the astonished wedding-guests are informed, that Berthalda is a foundling and in reality the daughter of Undine's foster-

parents. Abandoned by all, Berthalda finds a refuge in Hugh's castle, where she is affectionately received by Undine. Unmindful of the kindness shown her, she succeeds in alluring by her charms Hugh and persuades him to repudiate Undine. Brought back to her watery realm by Kuehleborn, she cannot forget her beloved husband. The latter in order to destroy all connexion with the water-spirits causes the wells of his castle to be closed up and then proceeds to marry Berthalda. But the esquire Veit, who cannot forget his kind mistress and intends to avenge the disgrace done to her, with his friend Hans, take the stone from the well, out of which the white-veiled figure of Undine arises. She appears at midnight amidst the wedding-guests and Hugh, smitten with remorse, throws himself at her feet, preferring death to a dishonourable life. Both are submerged under the falling debris of the castle and transported to the sea-palace of Kuehleborn, who reunites the lovers.

Czar and Carpenter.

The Czar Peter the Great of Russia is living incognito as a simple carpenter at the little sea-port of Saardam in Holland to learn the art of ship-building. Among his comrades is also a Russian deserter, named Peter Iwanow, a homely, simple child of nature, who is fettered to Saardam for the love of Mary, the niece of the ambitious burgomaster. Both Peters have different reasons for preserving their disguise and for this reason, as well as being countrymen become good friends. The ambassadors of England and France, to whom it is of great consequence to make a separate-

treaty with Russia have succeeded in discovering the place, where the Czar is concealed; but it is difficult to find out the wearer of the crown among so many carpenters. With the help of the burgomaster, the two Peters are soon discovered and the only doubt now is, which is the right Peter. The cunning French ambassador has already found out his man and makes an advantageous bargain, while the phlegmatic English Lord, led astray by Van Bett, the burgomaster, treats with Peter Iwanow, who performs the part imposed on him with as much awkwardness as humour. In Iwanow's greatest embarrassment the Czar, who wishes to withdraw secretly from Holland, interferes. Just before his departure he makes himself known, promises his name-sake a pardon for his previous offence, unites him to Mary and begs the citizens of Saardam to retain a kind remembrance of the Imperial carpenter. Accompanied by the blessings and good wishes of the happy pair, his comrades and the people, he sets out to return to his empire.

The Poacher.

Baculus, an old schoolmaster, is on the point of marrying Gretchen, a poor orphan girl; just as the wedding-guests are assembled, a messenger of the Count of Eberbach appears and delivers a letter to Baculus, the contents of which informs him, that he is turned out of his office, for poaching on the previous night, in order to give his wedding-guests an especial treat, and this circumstance had been reported to the Count. Gretchen knowing, that the Count passes for a very gallant man, who cannot refuse any request a pretty

girl makes, determines to go to the castle and beg him to pardon her bridegroom, but the latter, as he is very jealous, violently opposes. When the schoolmaster is almost driven to despair, the Baroness Freimann; the Count's sister, who has not seen her brother for years, appears in the disguise of a student. She is roving through the country, accompanied only by Nanette, her waiting maid, disguised as her amanuensis. As she wishes very much to test incognito the constancy of her betrothed, the Baron Kronthal, who is on a visit at the castle, and, unrecognised by his sister, the Countess, she has introduced herself as a riding master, and offers to go instead of Gretchen to the castle, which offer is gladly accepted. In Gretchen's clothes, she appears before the Count, who as well as the Baron, instantly fall in love with her, whilst the Countess is also flirting with Baron Klausthal, her unknown brother. These comic intricacies finally find their dénouement by the supposed Gretchen avowing, that she is in reality the sister of the Count. The marriage of the Baron and Baroness, and the pardon which is granted to the happy schoolmaster for his poaching, closes this charming opera, which is considered next to Figaro the best German opera of that kind.

The Armourer.

The count of Liebenau has fallen in love with Mary, the only daughter of Hans Stadinger, an armourer. In two characters the Count pays her his addresses; one that of a highborn nobleman, the other that of a poor and simple journeyman-smith, who has assumed the name of Konrad and entered the service

of Stadinger in disguise with his faithful attendant. Mary pities the Count, who importunes her with his love, which she cannot return, for she has given her heart to Konrad, the homely journeyman. But the father will neither accept the highborn Count nor the simple journeyman as son-in-law, though the latter had once saved his child's life. But in order to free Mary from the persecution of the count as well as of Konrad, he determines to marry her to his other journeyman George, who in vain endeavours to reject the offer of the armourer on account of his master. The Count seeing all his endeavours frustrated by the obstinacy of Stadinger makes a sudden attack with his horsemen on his house. Now Stadinger infuriated by the Count's behaviour marries his daughter to Konrad. Great is his astonishment, when the homely journeyman turns out to be the Count, but submitting to what could not be recalled, he gives them his blessing.



Henry August Marschner.

B. Aug. 16th 1795 at Zittau (Saxony). At an early age he displayed great talent for music and singing. In 1813 he went to Leipzig to study jurisprudence, but the war with France compelled him to go to Prague. After the battle of Leipzig 1813, he returned to Leipzig, where he studied the theory of music under the direction of Tomaschek. In 1822 he came to Dresden to be present at the first representation of his opera "Henry the Fourth." Here he remained and was appointed Director of the German and Italian Opera.

The influence of Weber is seen in his following operas and in them he also displayed his fine genius. "The Wood-thief" and "Lucretia" were finished in Dresden. Disappointed at not receiving Weber's post after his death, Marschner went to Leipzig and wrote here "The Vampyr" (1828) and "Templer and Jewess" (1829). In 1830 he followed a call to Hannover as Royal chapel-master and here he finished the best of all his operas "Hans Heiling." In 1859 he retired from public life and died two years later Dec. 15th 1861.

Hans Heiling.

Hans Heiling, the king of the gnomes, falls in love with a daughter of man. He resigns the dominion over his subterraneous realm and disregarding the entreaties of his mother, who warns him of the falsehood and inconstancy of the children of the upper world, he emerges from his gloomy empire. But soon an unconquerable dislike takes hold of Anna, his bride, who, in reality loves the hunter Conrad. The Queen of the Gnomes appears and reveals to the terror-stricken maiden the origin of her bridegroom. The terrified girl takes refuge with Conrad, who offers her his hand, whereby he incurs the demoniacal hatred of the insulted spirit. Heiling, vowing vengeance, summons his subjects and promising them a speedy return, gains their assistance. In the midst of the wedding festivities, Heiling appears with his infernal troops. All seems to be lost, when suddenly the Queen of the gnomes appears, who induces her son to appease his vengeance. Heiling rushes into his mother's arms and returns with her to his gloomy abode, whilst the terrified children of man offer up their thanks to Heaven for having saved them.

Templar and Jewess.

The subject is taken from Scott's celebrated novel "Ivanhoe". The Scene is laid in the County of York in the year 1194. The Knight-templar Brian de Bois Guilbert has fallen in love with the fair Rebecca, the daughter of Isaac, a rich jew. He succeeds in carrying her off to his castle but all his advances are disdainfully repulsed. His outrage becomes known and both abductor, as well as the abducted are summoned before the tribunal of the Knight's Templars. Rebecca, accused of sorcery, is condemned to be burned at the stake. But moved by her protestations of innocence, the tribunal decides, that the case shall be put to the "Trial by Combat." Sir Brian is named the champion of the Holy Order, but who would appear for the Jewess! The time granted to name a champion is nearly expired and Rebecca is on the point of being chained to the stake. At that instant Wilfred of Ivanhoe, a Saxon Knight of noble birth appears and proclaiming the innocence of Rebecca, swears to uphold with lance and sword her just quarrel. This he does out of gratitude, having once, when dangerously wounded, found a refuge in Rebecca's house. The trumpets sound, the Knights charge and the combat begins. Sir Briam falls in the lists and Ivanhoe is the conqueror.

The opera closes with the return of Richard the Lionhearted, who proclaims, that he will put an end to the violent acts of the Knight's Templars.



Giacomo Meyerbeer.

B. Sept. 5th at Berlin. He was instructed in music by the celebrated Zelter and B. A. Weber. In 1810 he went to Darmstadt where he became a pupil of Abbé Vogler. From Darmstadt he went to Italy to study classical music and composition. From Italy he went to Paris where he published his first great opera in 1831 "Robert the Devil." The success of this opera was enormous. His following work "The Huguenots" had the same success. With these two operas his fame was founded and they have been given on every stage of the civilised world. In 1842 he followed a call to Berlin to be Director General of the Royal band there and the successor of Spontini. In 1849 he published his third masterwork "The Prophet." The "Star of the North" and "Dinorah" were also well received by the public. The representation of his last opera "The African" he did not live to see, for he died May 2nd 1864.

Robert the Devil.

Robert Duke of Normandy had been banished from his dukedom on account of his dissolute life. In the course of his wanderings he arrives at the court of Palermo, where he becomes enamoured of the Princess Isabella, who reciprocates his feelings. In order to gain her, he makes a bond of friendship with a certain Bertram, a stranger of unearthly appearance, who is no other than Robert's demon-father. But from this time all his undertakings are unfortunate. A tournament is to be held, the prize of which is the hand of Isabella. Robert under the influence of his demoniac friend loses his

money and all he possesses in gambling. The tournament takes place and the Prince of Granada wins the prize. Robert's rage and despair are unbounded and this moment is seized by Bertram to persuade him to purloin a miraculous branch from a cloister of bad repute, by the magic power of which, he would be enabled to carry off his beloved from those who surround her. The ghosts of the guilty nuns emerge from their tombs but are immediately changed into lovely nymphs who engage in a voluptuous dance; encouraged by them, Robert seizes the magic branch, by the aid of which he penetrates into Isabella's apartment. Overcome by her tears he throws away the cursed talisman. Pursued by his enemies, he takes refuge in the porch of the Cathedral, where he is found by Bertram who reveals to him, that he is his father and that Robert alone can rescue him from the impending dangers which threaten him. Robert, moved by the entreaties of his father, is about to give way when Alice, his foster-sister appears and recalls to him the memory of his beloved mother. While hesitating how to decide, the midnight hour strikes and Bertram is dragged away to the infernal regions. The union of Robert and Isabella concludes the opera.

The African.

Vasco de Gama, the celebrated Portuguese navigator, is condemned to prison because he had maintained before the council the existence of distant countries. In the second act Vasco is discovered in the dungeon of the Inquisition where he becomes acquainted with Selika, an African slave of great beauty.

Donna Inez his betrothed appears and announces that she has effected his deliverance by giving her hand to Don Pedro, who had been appointed Admiral of the fleet, which is on the point of starting for India. The third act takes place on board the Admiral's vessel. Vasco is surprised by Don Pedro at a meeting with Inez and is about to be put to death, when the ship founders upon the rocky coast of Madagascar. The inhabitants, leaping on board, are going to massacre the passengers, when they are stopped by a gesture of Selika, who after having been installed in her rights as queen and glowing with love for Vasco, declares him to be her husband, but discovering his love for Inez, resolves upon the death of both. She intends to humiliate her rival before putting her to death, but better feelings prevail and magnanimously she resigns her lover. She orders Vasco and Inez to be put on board a ship bound for Portugal, while she goes to a cape of the Island to die under the shadow of the deadly Upas tree. Beholding the vessel, which bears away her beloved European she expires.

The Huguenots.

Margu rite de Valois, the bride of Henry IV fosters the anxious wish to reconcile the contending parties of the Huguenots and Catholics.

For that purpose she sends her page Urban to Raoul de Nangis, the leader of the Huguenots. He receives the royal messenger, while visiting the Count de Nevers, a leader of the Catholics. Following her invitation Margu rite communicates her project of uniting, him with Valentine, the daughter of the Count

de St. Bris, the head of the Catholics. But Raoul, recognising in Valentine a lady, whom he had seen by accident at Nevers', refuses to thrust his attentions on her. Count de St. Bris, challenged by Raoul, plans in his turn the assassination of the latter; but Valentine, who had become in the meantime the wife of Nevers overhears the details of the plot and communicates them to Marcel, the faithful servant of Raoul, who at the proper moment appears to rescue his master. A bloody encounter is about to take place just as Marguérite enters; she appeases the contending parties. When Raoul learns that Valentine has never loved any one but him and that he owes her his life, he rushes away in despair, while his happy rival conducts Valentine exultingly to his palace. In the third act Raoul is surprised by Nevers, St. Bris and their followers, but Valentine succeeds in concealing him behind the tapestry.

From his hiding-place he overhears the vile plan, arranged by Catherine de Medicis for the massacre of the Huguenots on the Eve of St. Bartholomew. Hesitating between love and honour, he resolves to brave the intended danger. At a ball he informs his partisans of the impending peril. The Bell of St. Germain announces the beginning of the slaughter. Nevers has been killed immediately. Raoul meeting Valentine is united with her by the dying Marcel, when a sudden discharge of fire-arms terminates their life.

The Prophet.

The scene is laid in Holland in the year 1534. John of Leyden, the son of an poor woman, named Fides, who keeps an inn at Dordrecht, is in love with

Bertha a vassal of Count Oberthal. In the first scene the count's castle is represented. Bertha, who cannot marry without the count's consent, appears with Fides to ask his permission. But the Count, struck with the charms of Bertha, detains her in his castle in spite of the entreaties of Zacharia, Jonas and Matthison, the leaders of a rabble of Anabaptists in Westphalia, who succeed in exciting the peasantry to rise against their oppressors. In the meantime Bertha has fled from the castle and takes refuge with John, who conceals her, but is forced to surrender her to her pursuers as they threaten to kill his mother in her stead. Hesitating between love and filial duty, the latter feeling prevails and he gives up Bertha to the soldiers. In vain his mother endeavours to console her despairing son. Revenge is now his only thought, and he accepts the leadership of the Anabaptists. They now besiege Münster and John of Leyden assumes the regal and prophetic character. The Count Oberthal is taken prisoner and his life is in danger, but he is recognised by Jonas, who had formerly been his servant. His life however is saved by the intervention of the "Prophet", who learns from him, that Bertha is alive in Muenster. Exciting his followers to arms by religious hymns, he immediately makes an attack on the town and becomes master of the city. The third act shows the city of Muenster in full possession of the Anabaptists. Fides meets with Bertha, who is disguised as a pilgrim and both vow to take vengeance on the Prophet who, they believe has been the cause of John's death. The gorgeous ceremony of the coronation of the Prophet takes place with the greatest pomp; John fully persuaded that he is a "Prophet" descends from the altar,

when suddenly the voice of a mendicant is heard, claiming him as her son. A general exclamation of surprise is heard in the crowd, but John, recovering his presence of mind, denies the poor woman to be his mother and she to save her son, declares that she was mistaken. She is taken prisoner and the Prophet is carried away by the multitude in triumph. John, overwhelmed with despair, resolves to fire the palace himself. At the coronation banquet, to which all his enemies had gained admission and when singing a bacchanalian song, he orders the gates to be closed. An explosion is heard and whilst the walls fall in and flames burst forth from all sides, the palace is destroyed, burying in its ruins mother and son.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

B. 1756 at Salzburg. Next to Beethoven the most celebrated German composer; his father was his first instructor, and his progress in music under him was so great, that, when a child of six years, he played before the Emperor and Empress Francis I and Maria Theresa, who called him "the little sorcerer." This youthful prodigy had even then attained such a proficiency on the Piano, that his father went with him on a European tour. At Paris the child played on the organ before the whole French court and passed through the ordeal triumphantly. During this tour, he wrote his two first works before he had completed his eighth year. On his return to Salzburg in 1768 he wrote a complete opera by desire of Joseph II. At fourteen

he became director of the Archbishop of Salzburg's concerts. In 1781 he composed his "Idomeneus", and the hand of Constance Weber, a relative of the great composer, upon whom Mozart's affections were fixed, was the reward of its success. This was followed by the "Seraglio", which was received with the greatest enthusiasm and even Gluck was loud in its praises. After Gluck's death 1787 Mozart was appointed chamber-musician to the Emperor Joseph II. In 1786 he produced his "Nozza di Figaro" and in the following year his chef-d'œuvre "Don Giovanni" was given at Prague, and received with universal applause. His opera "Titus" was first sung at the coronation festival of Leopold II. "Cosi Fan Tutti" appeared in 1790 and his charming opera the "Magic Flute" was given to the world in 1791 the year of his death. His sublime "Requiem" was written on his death bed. Nature, so bountiful of intellectual gifts, had denied to Mozart physical strength. He died at the age of 36 at Vienna 1792. A statue has been erected to his memory at Salzburg.

The Marriage of Figaro.

This opera may be considered as a continuation of the "Barber of Seville". The merry barber Figaro has become the respectable valet of the Count of Almaviva. Figaro is just upon the point of marrying Susanne, the waiting-maid of the Countess. But the Count himself has an eye on the girl, and in order to delay the wedding he favours the pretended claims of Dr. Bartholo's old house-keeper to the hand of Figaro. The intrigue becomes more and more complicated,

though Figaro himself gets out of the dilemma, who turns out to be the son of the worthy couple from Seville, who acknowledge him, and also help him in his intrigues to overcome the machinations of the count. The latter had made an appointment to meet Susanne in the Castle garden. This the Countess made use of by exchanging dresses with Susanne; thus disguised both appear in the garden. Figaro seeing the imaginary Susanne with the Count, ventures to make love to the Countess, whom he takes for Susanne, but comes off very badly. Finally every one keeps what he has found. The Count begs the injured Countess to pardon him and swears everlasting love and fidelity.

The Magic Flute.

Tamino, an Egyptian Prince, falls in love with Pamina, the daughter of Astrifiamante, the Queen of Night, who had been secretly carried away by Sarastro, the High Priest of the temple of Isis, in order to bring her up in the path of virtue and to initiate her into the mysteries of the true religion. Tamino, seeing no other expedient to meet her also becomes a novice in the mysterious rites of the deity. To test the constancy of the lovers, they are separated by Sarastro and have to undergo the most trying proofs of their constancy. In the meantime, the Queen of Night endeavours to avenge herself on Sarastro by trying to persuade Pamina to steal the symbol of the Sun. Papageno, a bird-catcher, the buffo of the opera, known for his cowardice and gluttony, pretends to have once saved the life of Tamino. He is furnished with musical instruments, the sounds of which turn anger into mirth

and excite a desire for dancing, forming a striking contrast to the operations of the enchanted flute with which Tassimo had been provided by his protecting Genii, and by virtue of which he renders assistance in cases of peril. But all the stratagems of the Queen of Night are in vain. The lovers overcoming every obstacles by their courage and perseverance, and after undergoing the ordeal of fire and water are united.

Così Fan Tutte.

Isabella and Rosaura del Carmen, two sisters; are in love with Don Fernando and Don Alvar, two young officers, who firmly believe in the affection and fidelity of their betrothed. The bachelor Don Onofrio, who has no faith in human constancy, and contests this virtue does not exist in the fair sex, persuades his two friends to test the constancy of their betrothed. Both officers agree to a stratagem which will put their good faith to a hard trial. Under the pretext of having been called to Havannah on military duty, they come to take a tender farewell. After their departure, the ladies are in great distress, when Don Onofrio introduces to them two other officers, the disguised Don Fernando and Don Alvar, who without any hesitation declare their love. The officers are contemptuously repulsed, and in consequence pretend to take poison. The ladies in despair for their lives send for a physician, who appears in the person of the disguised maid-servant, Dolores, who has been bribed for this purpose by Don Onofrio. The physician by means of magnetism restores them to their usual health. The ladies unable to resist any longer succumb. Just when they

are about to sign the marriage contract Don Fernando and Alvar reappear in their proper character. Don Onofrio now reveals to the ladies the stratagem, and so a reconciliation is brought about.

Don Juan.

Don Juan, who is leading a frivolous and adventurous life, insults Donna Anna, a noble lady, and kills her father, the Commandant, who had tried to avenge his daughter's disgrace. Persecuted by Donna Anna, Don Octavio, her betrothed, and Donna Elvira, his wife, whom he had basely deserted, he now abandons himself to the most unbridled passions and brings himself nearer and nearer to a well deserved punishment. In the next scene he meets Anna with her lover Octavio. Elvira enters and informs them of the profligate life of Don Juan who, asserting his innocence, declares that Elvira is mad. But Anna recognises him as the murderer of her beloved father. The next act represents a great festival, given by Don Juan. During one of the dances, Don Juan attempts to insult Zerlina, a peasant girl. But her screams are heard and she is resented. To conceal his own part in the affair, Don Juan suddenly enters and accuses Leporella his servant of having insulted the girl. A thunderstorm is heard and three masks enter, who in presence of the whole company again expose his despicable conduct. In the third act Don Juan changes dresses with Leporello. In the disguise of his servant he meets Masetto, the lover of Zerlina, who had sworn to kill the seducer of his bride. Don Juan disarms him, and beats him most unmercifully, while on the other hand, Leporello,

who had assumed the character of his master is nearly killed by Octavio. In the next scene Don Juan is in a grave-yard where a statue has been erected to the Commandant.

In a mocking tone he invites the statue to supper. The invited guest appears and endeavours to persuade Don Juan to repent. Finding his entreaties useless, he seizes his hand and both disappear into a flaming abyss which has opened to receive them.

Il Seraglio.

Constance, the betrothed of Belmonte, an Italian nobleman, had been captured with her waiting-maid and Pedrillo, the servant of her lover, on her voyage to Sicily by an Algerine pirate. They are sold to Pascha Selim, a very humane man; the two women are shut up in his harem while Pedrillo is employed as an overseer in his gardens. Belmonte in search of his beloved, is informed by Pedrillo where they are. Disguised as an artist he arrives at the country-residence of Selim, who engages him to paint some pictures. This gives Belmonte an opportunity to concert with Pedrillo on the means of rescuing the lady and her maid, the plan however is frustrated by the vigilance of Osmin the Pascha's superintendant. A terrible death awaits them, but the Pascha moved by the constancy of the lovers sets them at liberty to the great anger of Osmin.



Victor Nessler.

B. Jan. 28th 1841 at Barr near Strassburg. He is one of the most talented composers of modern times. Now he lives at Leipzig where formerly he had been for a long time chapel-master of the Carola-theatre. His opera "The Rat-catcher of Hameln" first made him popular, and this popularity has been further increased by his last composition "The Trumpeter of Sækkingen" which has been a uniform success on all the great stages of Germany.

The Rat-catcher of Hameln.

The aldermen of the old city of Hameln are assembled in the Town-hall to find out some means for the destruction of the rats, which had become a terrible plague to the inhabitants. They accept the offer of Hunold Singulf who promises to rid the town of all the rats. As reward, he stipulates 100 Marks in silver and a gift to his own choice. The second act takes place at an inn. Hunold is enchanting the townsmen with his charming songs, when suddenly Gertrude appears. Both fall mutually in love at first sight and he carries her off in triumph followed by the curses of Wulf, the lover of Gertrude, who declares him to be a sorcerer.

In the third act Hunold lays a wager with Rhynperg, who is the discarded lover of Regina, the major's daughter, that he would succeed in obtaining a kiss from the haughty maiden. The scene changes and Hunold is discovered occupied with the fulfilment of his promise. Playing on his magic pipe, the rats rush

out of the town, and find their death in the floods of the Weser. In the next act Hunold claims his reward, but is refused under the pretext that he had succeeded by means of sorcery. Then asking a kiss from Regina's lips he is dismissed with sneers and contempt. He appears again at the nuptial ceremony of Regina, who is to become the wife of Heribert. With his magic strains he entices the bride, who submits to his wish. He is cast into prison and condemned to be burned at the stake as a sorcerer. His life however is saved by Gertrude who then throws herself into the river. Hunold in revenge allures the children of the town with his magic pipe and all find their grave in the floods of the river.

The Trumpeter of Sækkingen.

The prologue of the opera takes place in the court of the old castle at Heidelberg where a chorus of students and horsemen are singing. They are interrupted by the entrance of the steward, who commands them to be silent and not disturb the sleep of the Electress. The students however purpose serenading her which is preluded by the trumpet of Werner, a student, who blows in a masterlike manner. Now Conradin the trumpeter of the horsemen tries to persuade Werner also to become a horseman, which he refuses. But now the rector of the university appears with the beadle, who announces to the students that they are all expelled from the university. They change the pen for the sword and follow Conradin. The scene of the first act is the decorated square before the church of Sækkingen, where a chorus of peasants are about to insult the

daughter and sister-in-law of the Baron of Schoenau, who are returning from the festival of St. Fridolin. They are protected by Werner Kirchhofer, the former student and afterwards trumpeter of the Imperial troops. The old Baron of Schoenau who has heard of young Werner's bravery, sends for him, and as his head trumpeter has just died he takes Werner into his service. The second act takes place in the garden of the castle. Werner is just composing a new song when he is interrupted by his old friend Conradin who comes to fetch wine for his horsemen, which is always given to them on the Baron's birthday. Werner tells him that he has fallen in love with Maria. Afterwards Maria comes with her aunt. Whilst the latter is going away to give Conradin the wine, Werner takes advantage of this opportunity to confess his love to Maria. But her aunt, who has observed the pair tells the whole affair to her brother-in-law. Meanwhile the Count of Wildenstein has arrived with his son Damian the intended husband of Maria. Although Maria refuses to accept him, the Baron declares that she shall become his wife and Werner is dismissed. In the third act the castle of the Baron is besieged by peasants. In the ensuing battle with the revolting peasants they are bravely assisted by Werner and Conradin. Damian, who has shown himself a coward in the struggle, forfeits the hand of Maria; and Werner who has been wounded in the combat, is recognised by a mole on his arm to be the son of the Countess, and as he is now of equal birth with Maria is accepted by the old Baron as son-in-law.



Gioachimo Rossini.

B. Febr. 29th 1792 at Pesaro in Italy, an illustrious modern Italian composer. He was taught the rudiments of his art by his father, a strolling musician. Afterwards he became a pupil of the talented Tesai, under whose direction his talent developed so rapidly that he became director of a musical society. At the Lyceum of Bologna he perfected his studies, and acquired a more obtruse knowledge of music under the direction of the celebrated Mattei. Besides inferior compositions he published in 1812 at the age of 19 years "Tancred" which made his name celebrated throughout Europe. In 1816 he finished his world-famous masterwork "Barber of Sevilla" at Rome, which will for ever be a favourite of the public. His later works which still keep the stage are "La Cenerentola", "Othello" and "Tell". This last was written at the age of thirty-seven, and with it closed the career of Rossini as a composer. He died Nov. 13th 1868.

The Barber of Sevilla.

Count Almaviva has fallen in love with Rosine, the young ward of Doctor Bartholo, who jealously guards her, as he intends to marry her himself. All his endeavours to obtain an interview with her, in order to confess his love are in vain. At last he makes the acquaintance of Figaro, a barber, who advises him to introduce himself to the house of Rosine in the assumed character of a simple soldier. This he does, and now hears that her love for him is reciprocal. Afterwards he appears in the disguise of a

singing master and the lovers agree to elope. Bartholo prevents them carrying out their plan but he is caught in his own trap, as the notary he consulted has been deceived by the lovers, and his friend Basilio intimidated by their threats, signs the marriage-contract with Figaro as witness. In the end Bartholo is compelled to put on a cheerful face, and gives his consent to the union of the lovers and only carries off in return Rosine's dowry.

William Tell.

The Swiss suffering terribly under the Austrians determine to throw off their yoke, and are summoned by Tell, one of the principal confederates to meet him on the Rütli. The oppression under which his country is groaning arouses the patriotism of Arnold von Melchthal, who had hitherto disowned his country for the sake of Matilda, a princess of the House of Hapsburg, with whom he is in love; he now joins the confederates and vows to revenge the death of his father who had been barbarously put to death by order of the tyrant Gessler. The whole assembly swear to liberate Switzerland from the slavery under which it lies, and with the cry "To Arms" a scene of surpassing grandeur closes. The day of vengeance draws near. To celebrate the union of Switzerland with Austria, a great festival is to be held on which occasion a hat, conspicuously displayed on a lofty pole is set up in the square of Altdorf, to which every passer-by is commanded to pay the same respect and reverence as to his Imperial Majesty. Tell refusing the required obeisance, is ordered by Gessler to shoot an apple from the head of his own son. Tell after having

accomplished his task avows to Gessler that if his child had been hurt, a second arrow would have pierced the tyrant's heart. He is taken prisoner again but escapes during one of those tremendous squalls to which the Swiss lakes are liable. The signal for a general rising resounds, and the castles of the oppressors are levelled to the ground. Tells kills the Governor with his never-erring arrow and Switzerland is freed from the Austrian dominion. Mathilda joins the confederacy and is united to Arnold.



Robert Schumann.

B. June 18th 1810 at Zwickau in Saxony. He studied the law at Leipzig and Heidelberg, but this study he soon gave up for that of music. His master was the celebrated Wieck of Dresden where Schumann lived until 1850, when he was appointed director of an orchester in Düsseldorf. He is the greatest German lyrical composer, and his productions are very popular in his native country. The only opera he composed is "Genoveva" which is a great favourite and frequently given. He also composed the music for Byron's "Manfred" and a cantata entitled "Paradise and the Peri" the words of which were translated from Moore's poem. He died July 28th 1856 near Bonn.

Genoveva.

The count palatine Siegfried before setting out on an expedition against the Moors, entrusts his beloved wife Genoveva to the care of Golo his best friend,

who however is secretly in love with Genoveva. He makes a bond with Margaret, a sorceress, who had formerly been his nurse, and whom the count had once driven away from his castle. In revenge for this, she promises Golo that with the assistance of her vile arts Genoveva shall become his wife. In the second act Golo avows his love but is indignantly repulsed by the Countess. Vowing vengeance, he calumniates her to Drago, Siegfrieds faithful steward, and as he will not believe in the guilt of his lady, Golo persuades him to conceal himself in the bedroom of the Countess, in order to convince himself of her infidelity. This done, the servants are called together by Margaret who tells them Genoveva has a man in her bedroom. They rush in and find Drago in his place of concealment. All are now convinced of her guilt, and she is dragged away into the dungeon of the castle. Siegfried returning from the war is informed by Golo of her infidelity. He believes the traitor, and is still further convinced on seeing in a magic looking-glass which Margaret holds his wife in the arms of Drago, her supposed seducer. In a fit of frenzy, he orders two hunters to lead Genoveva into a wilderness and to murder her there with his own sword. Genoveva still persecuted with the guilty love of Golo, who promises to save her, prefers death to a life of shame. When the hunters are about to slay their innocent victim Siegfried appears, who in the meantime had been informed of Golo's perfidy. He throws himself at Genoveva's feet and implores her pardon for suspecting her. The much tried husband and wife are again united amidst the rejoicings of the populace.



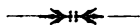
Ludwig Spohr.

B. April 5th 1784 at Seesen in Brunswick. His parents, both musicians, were his first instructors, afterwards he studied under Dufour and Mancourt. His musical reputation was so great, that at the age of 15 he was appointed chamber-virtuoso in the private band of the Duke of Brunswick, and 1812 chapel-master of the opera there. At the congress of Vienna 1814 he stood forth against every rival as the first violin player. Here Spohr finished his first opera "Faust". In the following year he left Vienna to follow a call to Frankfort on Main. After having lived a short time in Dresden, he was appointed on Weber's recommendation chapel-master to the Duke of Hesse-Cassel, where he published in 1823 his beautiful opera "Jessonda" which displays all the splendour of the East. Of less value are his other operas "The Crusaders", "Azor" and "Zemira". His oratorios "The Fall of Babylon", "The Last Judgment" and "The Crucifixion" are classed among the finest works of their order; these oratorios have not had such success in Germany as in England. Spohr died Oct. 22nd 1859 at Cassel.

Jessonda.

Jessonda, the young widow of a Rajah is, according to the custom of the country, doomed to be burned on the funeral pile of her deceased husband. At this time the Portuguese were besieging the town; the unhappy widow is conducted through the enemy's camp, to wash away all earthly feelings in the floods of the

Ganges. On this occasion she is seen by Tristan d'Accunha, the leader of the Portuguese troops, to whom Jessonda had previously pledged her love. But he dare not rescue her, as a truce had been made between the two parties. At the last moment, the Bramin Nadori reveals to Tristan a conspiracy of his country men against the besiegers which frees him from his parole. He enters the town by a subterreanous passage and rescues Jessonda.



Ambroise Thomas.

B. Aug. 5th 1811 at Metz, received his musical education at the Academy of Music in Paris. His best operas are "Mignon" and "Hamlet". Both have made their way through Europe. 1871 he became director of the Parisian Conservatory in place of Auber. His last opera is "Francesca da Rimini" (1882), which is distinguished by its grace and effective music.

Mignon.

Mignon, the heroine, a young lady of noble birth had been stolen, when a child, by a band of gipsies, the king of which treats her with the greatest harshness; he even forces her to dance in public and punishes her for the slightest fault. William Meister, a young student, struck with the beauty and grace of the girl, rescues her. Mignon becomes enamoured of her generous preserver, but he is in love with Philine, an actress and does not return her affection. In a fit of

jealousy Mignon is on the point of drowning herself, when the soothing sounds of a harp prevent her from carrying her terrible purpose into effect. Lotharo, her father who since his child's abduction has been wandering about in the guise of a minstrel in search of his beloved daughter, enters, to whom Mignon confides her griefs. Suddenly the castle is in flames. A terrible confusion ensues amidst which Mignon is missing. She is saved by the courage of William from the burning ruins. Overtaken by illness, she confesses in her delirium her love for William, who in the meantime has also become enamoured of her. By a girdle worn in her infancy, the happy father recognises his long lost child. Recovered from her illness, the union of the happy couple takes place.



Giuseppe Verdi.

B. Oct. 9th 1814 in the village of Roncole near Parma, the greatest Italian composer of modern times, is the son of a poor inn-keeper. His first instructor was Provesi, the organist of his native-place. A certain Barezzi, his patron, sent him to Milan, where he perfected himself under Lavinga. His creative genius culminates in operatic music. His reputation was no founded until he gave to the public his "Ernani" 1843, which made his name famous all over the world. He has written 27 operas of which the best are: Rigoletto (1851), Il Trovatore (1853), La Traviata, The Sicilian Vespers (1855), Un ballo in Maschera (1859), La Forza del Destino (1862), Macbeth (1865), Don Carlos

(1867), Aïda (1871), Othello (1881). He lives the greater part of the year at his country-seat near Busseto, Parma.

Rigoletto.

The profligate Duke of Mantua employs Rigoletto, his deformed jester, to carry out his vile purposes. He assists in the seduction of the wife of Count Monterone, who pronounces a terrible malediction against Rigoletto. This curse he can never forget, and has a presentiment, that some day it will be fulfilled. Rigoletto has a beautiful and virtuous daughter, named Gilda, whom he endeavours, but in vain, to conceal from the Duke. He however discovers her, gains her affection, and bribes Ceprano to convey her to his palace, Rigoletto unwittingly assisting in the abduction.

The unhappy father vows deadly vengeance and engages Sparafucile to assassinate the Duke. But Madalena, the assassin's sister, falling in love with the latter implores her brother to spare him. Sparafucile consents on condition, that a substitute should be found. Gilda who overheard this plot, disguises herself in man's attire and resolves to die in the Duke's stead.

She is stabbed, and delivered, as though it were the Duke, to Rigoletto. When the latter is just on the point of consigning his burden to the water, he hears the voice of the Duke. Horror-struck he opens the sack and recognises his dying daughter. In despair, he falls down senseless on finding Monterone's curse fulfilled.

The Troubadour.

The count of Luna has caused the mother of Azucena, a gipsy, to be burnt alive for practising the

arts of sorcery. In revenge, Azucena steals the count's younger brother, Maurico, who passes as her son, and in the disguise of a minstrel, wins the love of Leonore. But the count, who is also in love with her, now becomes his bitter persecutor. Leonore having received the unfounded news of Maurico's death intends to take the veil. She is carried off by the count from the altar, but released by Maurico, who becomes her husband, on hearing that Azucena is going to be burned by the count's order, he unfortunately endeavours to rescue her.

He is taken prisoner and sentenced to death. Leonore pretends to offer herself to the Count as the price of Maurico's freedom but poisons herself in preference to surrendering herself to him. The latter finding himself deceived, orders the execution of Maurico. Afterwards Azucena reveals to him that Maurico is his younger brother whom he had so long sought in vain.

Aïda.

The first scene takes place in the garden of the Pharaohs at Memphis, into which Ramphis, the High-priest of Isis enters to announce to Radamès, Captain of the Royal Guards, that the Ethiopians are again in revolt. Radamès who by the decision of the sacred Isis, has been appointed leader of the Egyptian troops leaves Memphis to fight against the Ethiopians, who commanded by their king Amonasro, are investing Thebes. Radamès hopes, after having defeated the foe, to obtain as a reward for his bravery, the hand of Aïda, the captive daughter of the king of Ethiopia. The war is soon finished and Amonasro himself is taken

prisoner by Radamès. The latter compels the king to give the prisoners their freedom, with the exception of Amonasro and his daughter Aïda. Pharaoh grants Radamès as a reward for his great services, the hand of his daughter Amneris. In his captivity King Amonasro has observed the cordial intercourse between Aïda and Radamès. He resolves to take advantage of this circumstance for the destruction of his enemies, and begs his daughter to steal from Radamès the plans of the new war which has just broken out. Aïda promises to do so, in the hope of being able to escape to her own country with her father and lover. But the lovers are surprised in the Temple of Isis by Ramphis, the High-priest and Amneris. Radamès is accused of having betrayed his country to the enemy. He is condemned to be burned alive. In the last scene Radamès is seen in prison and at his side Aïda, who is willing to die with her lover.

La Traviata.

The subject is taken from Duma's novel "The Lady with the Camelias". Alfred Germont is really in love with Violetta, one of the most celebrated and at the same time extravagant beauties of Paris; Violetta returns his passion and for his sake gives up the frivolous life of the capital, and both retire to one of Alfred's estates where for some time they live a retired but happy life. Alfred's father now appears and reproaches Violetta for her past life, and also for having destroyed the happiness of his whole family. Violetta broken-hearted determines to abandon Alfred who indignant at this unaccountable conduct, and brooding revenge

follows her to Paris, where he finds her returned to her previous life. Flora Bervoix, a former friend of Violetta's, has given a magnificent ball, and here Alfred finds Violetta with her new favourite, the Baron Dauphal. A duel takes place in which the Baron is wounded and Violetta is seized with a sudden illness to which she had formerly been predisposed. In the third act she is seen in a dying state roused however to consciousness on hearing that Alfred's father has given his consent to their marriage. Father and son find her in a transport of joyful agitation and are deceived for a short time about the really hopeless condition of the invalid. Only too soon the false strength which had buoyed her up fails; the repentant sinner dies, consoling to the last moment the despairing Alfred.

Don Carlos.

The scene of the first act is the Cloister of St. Just. Don Carlos, Crown Prince of Spain, bewails the loss of his bride, the beautiful Elizabeth of Valois, who is married to his father Philip II. His friend Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, who has just returned from Flanders persuades him to leave Spain. The Marquis implores the Queen to give her former lover an interview before leaving. The meeting takes place and the Queen promises Don Carlos to procure his father's permission for his departure to Flanders. Don Rodrigo in the meanwhile becomes the King's personal friend but he does not forget his friendship to Don Carlos who lives at enmity with his father. The second act shows the garden of Queen Elizabeth, afterwards the Cloister of St. Just. The Princess of Eboli loves Don Carlos and

invites him to come into the queen's garden at midnight. He comes thinking he will meet the Queen. When he discovers the deception he tells the Princess that he does not love her. Now she determines to revenge herself. She opens the Queen's casket and places letters from Don Carlos with his portrait in the hands of Philip. Don Carlos in the meantime had been imprisoned for demanding too authoritatively the supreme command in Flanders. The third act opens with a meeting between the King and the Grand Inquisitor. Philip asks his advice how to treat his son for defying his father. The Grand Inquisitor who is a bitter enemy of the Marquis of Posa accuses the latter as the cause of Don Carlo's behaviour and demands him to be given up to the Inquisition. In the following scene the Marquis visits his imprisoned friend. During their conversation a rifleman of the Royal Guard appears. A shot is heard and Don Rodrigo dies in the arms of Carlos. The latter now intends going to Flanders but before he goes he wishes to see the Queen once more. He has a secret meeting with her but is surprised by the King and delivered over to the Inquisition.



Richard Wagner.

B. May 22nd 1813 at Leipzig is the greatest and most celebrated composer of modern times. He is the reformer of dramatic music and the creator of the new musical drama. His aim was the perfection of

the musical drama according to the ideas of Gluck and Weber. He totally abolished the aria proper in the opera and placed the whole weight of his musical energy and inspiration in the dialogue. Taking subjects for his musical dramas from the old German heroic legends he has conferred on his creations an especially national character. His love for music was awakened on hearing Weber's Opera "The Freischuetz". He filled from 1834 the place of chapel-master of the theatres in Magdeburg, Riga and Königsberg. 1839 he went to Paris where he composed the opera "Rienzi" and "The Flying Dutchman". In the spring of 1842 he returned to Germany and visited the Wartburg on his way to Dresden, where Rienzi was performed for the first time amidst storms of applause. The brilliant success of this opera led to Wagner's engagement as Conductor of the Royal Opera but joining the insurrectionary movement of 1848 and 1849 he was obliged to fly the country as an exile. In 1864 he was permitted to return to his native soil and settled at Bayreuth, where he had a theatre built for himself and supported by the late King Lewis II. of Bavaria, his noble patron. There his gigantic work "The Nibelungs" was performed with enthusiastic applause in presence of a distinguished audience viz. the Emperor William of Germany, King Lewis II of Bavaria, the Emperor of Brazil, and other princely personages, who appeared to witness this triumph of German art. Never since the national festivals of ancient Greece had such enthusiasm been witnessed in any country as during these representations,—the work of one master-mind, brought to perfection by the indomitable perseverance and the prodigious success of a single man. In 1870 he married for the

second time Cosima von Buelow, a daughter of Liszt. He died Febr. 13th 1883 at Venice, a year after his last creation "Parsifal" had been represented at Bayreuth. His best creations are Lohengrin and Tannhäuser, which considering the deeply striking force, truth and genuine poetical feeling, as well as the transporting power of the music belong to the greatest productions of musical art of modern times.

Lohengrin.

Henry I, King of Germany, having arrived at Antwerp to levy troops in order to carry on war against the Hungarians, finds the country in a state of anarchy. Godfrey, the young heir of the Duke, has disappeared and Count Telramund accuses Elsa, Godfrey's sister of having made away with her infant brother. The accuser is the husband of Ortrud of Friesland, in whose right he claims to rule the duchy. Elsa appears before the king and declares her innocence; the king decides that the case shall be settled by a combat between Telramund and any champion who might appear for Elsa. The trumpet already has sounded for the second time and it seems as if no one would come to espouse her cause. While Elsa is fervently praying for a deliverer to appear, a boat drawn by a swan suddenly glides up the river. A knight of heavenly beauty steps from it. He proclaims Elsa's innocence, offering to be her champion and asks her in marriage as the price of his valour and makes her promise never to ask his name or origin. In the combat Telramund is dangerously wounded and deprived of his estate. While the king himself orders the preparations

for the marriage, Telramund and Ortrud are plotting revenge.

Ortrud gaining admission to Elsa moves her so much, that she promises to obtain Telramund's pardon and to gain the secret she has pledged herself never to ask. As the nuptial procession approaches the cathedral, Ortrud and Telramund denounce the unknown knight as a sorcerer; nevertheless the marriage takes place, but when the newly united pair are alone in the bridal chamber Elsa asks the fatal question, which must lead to the misery of both. Here Telramund rushes into the room but is instantly killed by the knight. The tie between Elsa and Lohengrin is now for ever broken. Next morning the knight is compelled to reveal to the king that he is Lohengrin, the son of king Parcival, the knight of the Holy Grail. The swan returns to take Lohengrin away but at the same moment, he removes a gold ring from the swan's neck, and in its stead Godfrey, the rightful duke appears, who had been changed into a bird by the sorceress Ortrud. A white dove descends to fulfil the office of the swan. Lohengrin disappears and Elsa falls senseless to the ground.

Rienzi.

The scene is laid in Rome where Rienzi, a young enthusiast, dreams of re-establishing the glories of ancient Rome and making this City once more the queen of the world. At the opening of the first scene Orsini, an Italian prince, attempts to carry off Irene Rienzi's sister, but she is saved by the appearance of Adrian di Colonna her lover. Now Rienzi whose

young brother had been murdered by a patrician, resolves to put an end to the oppressions of the insolent nobles. He succeeds in arranging a general rising of the armed populace in his favour. The nobles are defeated and Rienzi is created tribune of the people amidst the rejoicings of a grateful multitude. The second act represents the reception-room in the Capitol where gorgeous festivals are given to celebrate Rienzi's military success. Orsini the chief of the nobles makes an attempt to stab Rienzi, who however is saved by a shirt of mail which he wears under his toga. The nobles who had all been sentenced to death are pardoned at the request of Adriano, the son of Orsini. But Rienzi has soon cause to repent this act of leniency by which the confidence of the people in their leader had been deeply shaken. Returning from a victorious campaign, he is prevented entering the Lateran Church by the Legate Raimondo, who pronounces an anathema on Rienzi. Deserted by all, his sister Irene alone clings to him, Adriano implores her to fly with him, this she indignantly refuses. In the closing scene Rienzi attempts in vain to address the infuriated populace, who surround the Capitol and set it on fire. He perishes with his sister under the burning debris of the palace.

Tannhæuser.

In the 13th century the Landgrave of Thuringia, Hermann, was a great patron of poetry, and entertained a number of minstrels of noble birth at his court. Tannhæuser, a knight-minstrel of renown, wins the affection of Elizabeth, the Landgrave's niece. His qualities inflamed the Goddess Venus to induce him

to enter her enchanted castle near the Wartburg. Tannhäuser weary of his earthly lot, enters the Horselberg, the abode of Venus, where he passes a whole year with her. Ashamed of this life he wishes to depart and after the goddess had unwillingly consented, suddenly the scene changes, and he finds himself in a lovely vale behind the Wartburg. Lost in amazement he is awakened by the chants of some pious pilgrims; overwhelmed with remorse, he kneels down and prays. At this moment horns announce the arrival of a hunting party and soon after the Landgrave with his knight-minstrels appear. Wolfram recognises Tannhäuser and persuades him to accept the invitation to a tournament then about to be held. Tannhäuser hoping to see Elizabeth again, gladly accepts the invitation. The second act represents the tournament of the minstrels. The theme given by the Landgrave is "Love". Wolfram, Walter and Bitteralf win general approbation. Now Tannhäuser rises with sparkling eyes and apostrophises love in quite different strains. At last he reveals to the terror-stricken assembly his sojourn in the Venusberg. Tannhäuser's life is only spared by the intercession of Elizabeth. He now joins a party of pilgrims who are wandering to Rome, in order to obtain absolution for his sins.

In the third act a valley near the Wartburg is seen. Elizabeth awaits the return of the pilgrims. They return, but Tannhäuser is not among them. Elizabeth in despair implores death to put an end to her sufferings. Tannhäuser unabsolved and accursed by the holy father returns from Rome. In his despair he is again going to seek refuge in the Venusberg but is prevented by Wolfram who tells him that an angel has

fled to heaven to pray for him; that angel is Elizabeth. A procession descends into the valley, bearing an open bier on which Tannhäuser recognises Elizabeth; sinking under the weight of his sufferings he prostrates himself on the bier and expires.

The Flying Dutchman.

Daland, a seaman, cast on a deserted coast meets there a ship of strange appearance, the captain of which, a Dutchman, tells him that a terrible malediction rests on him. In a fearful storm, he had challenged Satan himself to prevent him rounding a certain Cape, whereupon he was doomed by the latter to wander for ever on the Ocean. Once in seven years he is allowed to go on shore for a short time and if he then should meet a woman willing to become his wife the charm would be broken. Daland, moved by compassion, offers him his daughter Senta for wife. They arrive at Daland's house. Senta, who was acquainted with the legend of the Flying Dutchman is struck by the sudden appearance of the latter, and feeling pity and affection for the noble and unhappy stranger consents to become his wife. When all the preparations for the nuptials are made the Dutchman surprises his bride, when she is taking farewell of Erik her former lover, and thinking himself deceived he rushes away in despair to his ship. Senta finding her efforts fruitless to restrain him throws herself into the sea and thus breaks the spell. The Dutch ship founders with the crew, while the Dutchman and his bride emerge from the waves.

The Rhinegold.

First act: The Gnome Alberich, a Nibelung, appears to the three Rhine-nymphs, who are guarding the mysterious treasure of the Rhinegold, and makes love to them all, but is repulsed. Suddenly, to Alberich's great astonishment, the Rhinegold shines forth from the top of a rock. Astonished at this sight, he asks what it signifies and is told by the Nymphs that, whoever forswears love would be enabled to lay hold of the gold and that a ring made from it would render him all-powerful. Driven to frenzy by the nymphs taunting words, he climbs the rock, seizes the gold, swears to forego woman's love and then casts himself into the river. While the frightened nymphs are giving chase, a sudden darkness overspreads the scene.

Second act: The scene represents a lovely valley, through which the Rhine flows. In the background rises a magnificent castle, tipped with the rays of the rising sun. Wotan and Fricka on awaking from a long sleep behold a lofty, fantastic castle, the Walhalla, built for them by the giants Fasolt and Fafner. They are talking of Freia, the goddess of youth and beauty, whom Wotan has promised to give up as payment to the giants. The latter appear and Wotan strives in vain to delay the fulfilment of his promise, for if once deprived of Freia all the Gods would become grey and old. Finally the giants are willing to take the Rhinegold instead of Freia. Wotan, perceiving no other expedient, sets off with Loge to Nibelheim, whilst the giants carry off Freia as a hostage.

Third act: The scene represents the subterranean dwelling of the Nibelungs. Alberich, the ruler of all

his kind compels Mime, his brother, to make him a wishing-cap (Tarnhelm). The latter intends to keep it for himself but Alberich takes it from him by force. To try its effects, he makes himself invisible and punishes Mime with a whip, the strokes of which are heard but not seen. Wotan and Loge appear and the latter persuades Alberich to show them the power of his cap. Alberich changes himself instantly into a huge dragon and then to a toad. Wotan sets his foot upon it and the Gods in triumph carry him off captive.

Fourth act: They are next seen in front of the Walhalla, where Alberich is forced to yield up all his treasures, even the Tarnhelm and the ring as the price of his freedom. On parting with the ring, he pronounces an awful curse upon the possessor of it. The giants appear with Freia and claim the treasures in her stead. Wotan resigns the ring on the advice of Erda. A quarrel ensues between the two giants about the possession of the ring, in which Fasolt is slain. While Fafner makes off with his booty Thor clears the air with a thunderstorm, and the Gods pass over a splendid rainbow to their lordly castle "The Walhalla".

The Valkyre.

The action of this drama is a continuation of Rhinegold. The first act shows Hunding's dwelling where Siegfried takes refuge from a violent thunderstorm. While at table he relates he is the son of Walse and that one day returning from the chase with his father, they found their house burned down, his mother murdered, and his sister disappeared. After this he leads an adventurous life, is followed by the brothers

of a girl whom he has saved from a compulsory marriage; he kills them, whereupon the kindred pursue him and he flies to Hunding's hut. Hunding is one of those who pursued him and Siegfried is recognised by his tale; the laws of hospitality however prevent Hunding injuring him that night, so he declares he must fight him the next morning. Sieglinde, who is smitten with the stranger, retires with her husband but shortly returns, and tells Siegmund that she has given Hunding a narcotic. Both become more and more attached to one another: and Sieglinde draws Siegmund's attention to a sword which an unknown old man had left sticking in a tree, and adds the wish Siegfried may succeed in drawing it out. This he does, and she then reveals that she is Walse's daughter and Siegfried's sister. He draws her passionately to his breast and the curtain drops. The second act discovers a wild rocky scenery. Wotan commends Brunhild to protect Siegfried in his combat with Hunding who pursues him. Brunhilde withdraws Fricka, Wotan's wife, appears and asks of him to let Siegfried perish for his dreadful crimes. It now turns out that Wotan is Walse, and the father of Siegfried and Sieglinde. He at last promises Fricka to fulfil her wish and orders Brunhild to let Siegfried perish in the combat. Siegfried and Sieglinde enter the scene; the latter tormented by the stings of conscience, while the former tries to comfort her. Brunhild appears and desires Siegmund to follow her to Walhalla. He hearing that Sieglinde may not accompany him, prefers to fight with Hunding, although he knows Wotan has determined his death. Brunhild touched with his faithfulness, resolves to protect Siegfried against the will

of his father, and goes with him to the mountains where the combat is to take place, leaving Sieglinde asleep in the hut. The combat commences during a violent thunderstorm. Brunhild hovers over Siegfried and covers him with her shield. He is just going to give Hunding a decisive blow when Wotan intercepts the sword with his spear. The sword shivers, and Hunding thrusts his sword into Siegmund's breast. Sieglinde who had hurried to the scene sinks down with a piercing cry to the ground, and is taken away by Brunhild. With a contemptuous motion of Wotan's hand Hunding falls down dead and the act closes with a menacing exclamation of Wotan against Brunhild for having disobeyed his command.

The third act opens with a scene presenting eight Valkyres who by order of Wotan are to wait for the ninth, Brunhild, on the top of a hill. She appears with Sieglinde, and begs her sisters to save her from Wotan's persecution. But they refuse for fear of Wotan. Brunhild then persuades Sieglinde to save herself in a wood where Fafner in the shape of a dragon was guarding Alberic's ring. Giving her the pieces of Siegmund's sword, she tells her that he who once brandishes the sword when restored will bear the name of Siegfried. Wotan banishes the disobedient Brunhild, and determines to sink her into a deep sleep, and let her become the wife of whoever might happen to awake her, but at her earnest prayer, he alters this severe sentence and instead, encircles the sleeper with fire through which he who fears its blazing darts can never pass. This ends the First Part of the Trilogie, the thread of which is taken up again in the Second

Part the hero of which is Siegfried, the son of Siegmund and Sieglinde.

Siegfried.

First act: The Nibelung Mime, Albrich's brother, who lives in the heart of the forest, has found Sieglinde, who dies in giving birth to Siegfried.

He brings up the boy as his own child, but he knows that he is destined to slay Fafner and to gain possession of the ring. All the swords, which Mime forges are contemptuously broken like splinters of wood by Siegfried, who discovers that the fragments of his fathers sword are in Mime's possession. He orders the latter to forge a new sword, of irresistible strength, which Mime is unable to accomplish. Siegfried now forges the weapon himself, and testing its strength splits the anvil at one stroke. Overcome with joy he calls it Nothung (Needful).

Second act: Mime induces Siegfried to follow him to a distant part of the forest, where Fafner in the shape of a huge dragon is guarding the treasures of the Nibelungs. Siegfried kills the dragon but by chance tasting its blood, he is enabled to understand the language of birds. One bird informs him, that Mime intends to poison him; he kills the traitor and then follows the bird which also tells him that a fair maiden lies sleeping on a rock in a charmed circle of fire and that only a hero without fear can win her.

Third act: Wotan wanders restlessly over the world with a presentiment of evil, vainly seeking counsel of Erda, the mother of earth. Siegfried appears. Wotan opposes his path to the maid but Siegfried shivers his

spear with a stroke of his sword. Wotan then retreats to Walhalla to await the Dusk of the Gods, while Siegfried makes his way through the fire and finds the sleeping Brunhilde. He awakes the Valkyre, declares his love, woos and wins her, and with the rejoicing of the happy pair the act closes.

The Dusk of the Gods.

In the prelude the three Nornen are discovered weaving their rope of runes. Suddenly it breaks and they fade away to their mother Erda knowing beforehand that the end of the Gods is drawing near. Siegfried appears in full armour and quits Brunhilde for a while to go on new exploits. When taking leave of her, he gives her his famous ring and receives instead Grane, her war-horse. In the course of his wanderings he comes to the court of the Gibichungs on the banks of the Rhine. He is hospitably received by the King Gunther, his sister Gudrun, and Hagen, the son of Alberic. Following the advice of Hagen, they give Siegfried a magic potion, which he drinks and now loses all recollection of Brunhilde. He falls in love with Gudrun and Gunther promises him the hand of his sister, if Siegfried in his turn, consents to woo for him Brunhilde the mountain maid. They swear brotherhood, and then depart leaving Gudrun under the care of Hagen. Brunhilde while anxiously awaiting Siegfried's return is visited by her sister Valtrauta, who implores her to surrender the ring to the Rhine-nymphs, this being the only means of saving the immortal Gods; but Brunhilde regarding her love-pledge as of more value than the fate of the Gods will not comply with

her wish, and Valtrauta rushes away in despair. Siegfried in the shape of Gunther appears to the terror-stricken Brunhilde and insists on a husband's rights tearing the all powerful ring from her finger. In the meanwhile Alberich visits his son Hagen and persuades him to kill Siegfried and get the ring, which would make them the masters of the world. Siegfried with Gunther and Brunhilde return to Gibich's Hall and the double wedding is to be celebrated when Brunhilde beholds her ring on Siegfried's hand. She announces to all that she has been the victim of the most shameful deceit and declares that Siegfried is her husband. Siegfried, to prove his innocence swears the oath on the point of Hagen's spear; but Brunhilde bursting with rage rushes into the circle and declares Siegfried a perjurer, whereupon Hagen, Gunther, and Brunhilde resolve upon his death. Siegfried who is hunting near the Rhine is addressed by the Rhine-nymphs with the view of coaxing the ring from him. He refuses, but they tell him that it will be the cause of his death. He laughs at their warning and joins the hunting party. While he is telling the story of his life he is stabbed in the back by Hagen. The body is brought to the Hall; in the struggle for the ring Gunther is killed by Hagen and when he is on the point of seizing the ring Brunhilde appears to claim her rights. She orders a funeral pile to be made on the banks of the Rhine, which she ascends with the dead body of Siegfried. Both are consumed by the flames which immediately blaze up. The floods of the Rhine sweep over the fire and three Rhine-nymphs appear joyously holding up the recovered ring. Hagen in wild wrath plunges into the flood but is drawn down by the Rhine-

daughters. An increasing red glare is seen on the horizon announcing the "Dusk of the Gods".

The Mastersingers.

Pogner, a goldsmith, one of the oldest of the Mastersingers of Nuremberg had offered the hand of his lovely daughter to the Master, who at a public Singing-match would win the prize. A young knight who had left the castle of his ancestors to learn in Nuremberg the art of the Mastersingers, becomes enamoured of her. But as only a master can win the prize, he declares his wish to be admitted into the guild. At his examination he sings an enthusiastic song in praise of love, which causes the disapprobation of the "Marker" his rival, who declares him "outsung" before he has got half through. Hans Sachs, a shoemaker, however takes a liking to the young knight and resolves to frustrate the purposes of Beckmesser, who spoke roughly to the master with the design of humiliating him for not having finished a pair of shoes which he had ordered. On one occasion when Beckmesser is singing a serenade under the maiden's window he also begins to sing loudly, telling the infuriated town-clerk that he is doing so in order to keep himself awake. Finally the unfortunate lover fails in the presence of his beloved, and is driven away by the aroused apprentices. The next day the disconsolate Beckmesser begs Hans Sachs to compose a poem for him for the Singing-match. The latter gives him a poem of Walter's which Beckmesser sings in such a distorted manner before the assembly of the masters that this time, he makes a thorough failure, whilst Walter singing the

same song to another tune, is adjudged the victor. He wins his bride, but rejects the offer of entering into the guild of the Master-singers.

Tristan and Isolda.

Tristan, the orphan son of Rivalin, is sent when a child to the court of his uncle Marke, King of Cornwall; there he grows up, is created a knight, and distinguishes himself by his bravery and courage. In a battle which is fought to free Cornwall from a heavy tribute Tristan kills Marold, an Irishman and the lover of Isolda, daughter of the King of Ireland. Tristan himself is dangerously wounded, but is tenderly nursed and cured of his wounds by Isolda, who, as he is disguised, is unconscious that he is the murderer of her lover, whose death she has sworn to revenge. Later she discovers this but forgets her oath, for ever since the wounded Tristan's glance fell on her the magic power of love enslaves her heart. After his recovery he returns to Cornwall and is again sent to Ireland by King Marke to solicit for him the hand of Isolda. Isolda's affection for Tristan now changes to hatred when he appears before her as wooer for another. Reluctantly however she submits to the decision of her father to accept Marke's suit. While preparations for the departure are being made, Isolda's mother gives a casket to Brangaene, the faithful handmaid of her daughter which contains a Death-draught, a Love-potion and several other Phials. During the voyage, Isolda's love returns with increased vehemence, but she conceals it from Tristan by whom she fancies herself deeply slighted. Tristan on the other hand, manfully

conceals his love from Isolda, in order to discharge faithfully his sacred trust towards his uncle. Isolda is the first to break through this imposed restraint. Ostensibly demanding expiation for the murder of Marold she hands to Tristan the Death-draught, intending to share it with him. They drink—and now that the potion has doomed them to approaching death they no longer conceal their mutual passion. Isolda forgets her hatred—Tristan his mission. In the arms of death itself, as it were, exultant words of love break out, and they discover that it was not the Death-draught of which they had partaken. Isolda's handmaid had substituted a love-potion and they had fallen a prey to Love's potent charm. Thus ends the first act. In the second act Isolda is married to Marke and in the only meeting of the lovers presented to us, he discovers her infidelity through the treachery of a pretended friend.

Deeply wounded, but with the greatest dignity, he speaks of the established law of morality, and the dreadful sin the lovers have committed in the breach of it. The most poignant pain of this truly king-like man is the loss of his devoted friend. Tristan is so overwhelmed by the enormity of his guilt, that he attempts no explanation, but seeks an atoning death at the hands of the traitor Melot. Tristan's death-struggle is the grand scene of the third Act, he cannot die without having seen Isolda, and sends a messenger to entreat her to come and heal him as she had once done. She follows this call and clasps the dying hero in her arms. With one last long look on his beloved, now again restored to him, he sinks slowly to the ground with the final ejaculation "Isolda". Over Tristan's dead

body Isolda falls senseless, and her spirit also escapes into the everlasting realm of peace and "Loud like a child upon them wept King Marke."

Parsifal.

The first scene shows us the old Gournemanz with two Esquires absorbed in their morning prayer, whilst from the distant castle rises the solemn morning reveille of trombones. They prepare a bath for their sick King Amfortas who is suffering from an incurable wound, caused by the sorcerer Klingsor, the antagonist of the Holy Grail. The lance which the king had used in the combat was the holy spear of Languinus. Kundry a demoniac sorceress in the service of Klingsor, who is condemned to an eternal laugh for deriding Christ when bleeding on the cross, succeeds in entangling Amfortas with her charms. Klingsor in the meanwhile deprives him of his weapon and wounds him with the holy lance: but the King can only be cured by coming in contact with the latter and again only he who "being a guileless fool with a pure heart and chosen by the Holy Grail" can close the wound and put an end to the sufferings of the King. To accomplish this and moved by compassion he must first ask the King the cause of his sufferings. Therefore the saying on the Holy Grail

"By pity lightened

"A guileless fool

"Wait for him

"My choosen tool."

A train of Knights and Esquires arrive with the litter of the King when suddenly Kundry appears, offering

a balsam from Arabia, which the King thankfully accepts and then repairs to his bathing-place. Suddenly a dying swan is seen falling down and a fair youth appears who is accused of killing it. Questioned as to his origin he proves his ignorance. But Gournemanz judges by his manners and behaviour that he is of noble birth, which is confirmed by Kundry who informs the youth, who is no other than Parsifal, of the death of his mother Herzeleide. This is the first sorrow which Parsifal endures. They arrive at the lordly castle where in a magnificent hall the knights are assembled. The revealing of the Holy Grail which is glowing with purple lustre takes place. Though Parsifal, on hearing Amfortas cry of agony makes a violent movement towards his own heart, however it is not moved by any deeper feeling of pity. The angry Gournemanz calling him a "gander" and advising him to seek for himself a "goose" drives him away with contempt.

The second act takes us to Klingsor's magic castle. Kundry changed into a woman of seductive beauty tells Parsifal of his beloved mother; overcome by remorse he sinks down at Kundry's feet who presses on his lips the first kiss of love. But Parsifal starting up terror-stricken cries out: "Amfortas, the spearwound in me I feel it burning."

The fool has become a knowing one! In vain Kundry endeavours to allure the pure. Finally she lays a dreadful curse on him. He leaves her with the words: "Thou know'st, where only we shall meet again." Now Parsifal wanders again restless all over the world. After long wanderings he meets the old Gournemanz again who leads him to the Holy Grail,

where he closes the wound of the suffering King. Whilst the "Grail" is glowing in purple lustre a white dove is seen floating down on Parsifal's head. The solemn homage of the Knights to their new King concludes the opera.



Carl Maria von Weber.

B. Dec. 18th 1786 at Eutin (Oldenburg), a celebrated German composer, was the son of an eminent violinist, by whom he was first instructed in the science of music. After receiving some further instruction from Heuschkel, he wrote some little operas and sonatas. In 1809—10 he went to Darmstadt where he, under the direction of Vogler, together with Meyerbeer, studied music. Soon afterwards he published his first great opera "Silvana" which made him known in Germany. 1812 he was named chapel-master of the Royal band at Prague. In 1817 he followed a call of Frederick August of Saxony, who appointed him chapel-master of the Royal opera-house in Dresden. In 1820 he published his finest opera "Freischuetz" which had immense success and was enthusiastically received in every European capital. In the following year he finished "Preciosa" which is not inferior to his first opera, and two years later, he published "Euryanthe". In 1825 he accepted an invitation to visit London and wrote for the Covent Garden Theatre his charming opera "Oberon". "Freischuetz" and "Oberon" have made his name celebrated far and near, and they will

always continue to be favourites of the musical world. He died June 5th 1826. A grateful posterity has erected a monument to his memory in Dresden.

The Freischuetz.

Max, a hunter, loves Agatha the daughter of a forester, but according to an old custom he can only obtain her hand if he succeeds in hitting a certain mark. He misses the mark, and in despair, persuaded by Samuel, called the Black hunter, he makes a bargain with Lucifer for some magic balls which never miss their aim. Samuel, who has sold his soul to Satan hopes he can save himself by substituting his rival. Max consents, and the magical operation which is to procure for him the never failing balls takes place. The hunters assemble to fire at a bird, and in the presence of the prince, Max is to prove his mastership. But the time appointed has expired, and instead of hitting the innocent hunter the magic ball pierces the heart of the sorcerer. Max is sentenced to exile by the prince for his participation in the sorcery, but is saved by the intervention of a hermit and the happy lovers are united.

Euryanthe.

In alliance with Eglantine, the crafty count Lysiart succeeds in causing the fidelity of Euryanthe the bride of count Adolar to be suspected, he giving credit to the shameful calumnies repudiates Euryanthe, and leads her himself into a desert place, where it is supposed she will miserably pine away. Lysiart afterwards taking

possession of Adolar's territories, marries his vile ally, who however overwhelmed with remorse falls into a state of madness and confessing the deceit practised upon Euryanthe is stabbed by Adolar. In the greatest despair he is going to summon the robber of his property and the murderer of his beloved Euryanthe before the judgment seat but is prevented from doing so by King Lewis, who declares the outrager to have forfeited all human laws. In the meantime Euryanthe has been found by hunters who were roving through the desert. Her return brings mirth and rejoicing to the hearts of all.

Oberon.

Oberon, the King of the Elfs, having had a quarrel with Titania his fairy consort, makes a vow never to be reconciled to her unless he could find a pair of lovers constant through peril and armed against every temptation. Such a pair of lovers is found by Puck, a shrewd and knavish sprite, Oberon's chief favourite, and privy counsellor. Sir Huon, a young knight, having killed a son of Charlemagne in a duel is condemned by the latter to travel to Bagdad, to slay the person who is sitting on the Caliph's left hand, and to ask his daughter in marriage. He immediately sets out with his faithful attendant, Scherasmin, on this dangerous undertaking. By virtue of a magic horn, which had been given him by Oberon, he succeeds in carrying off Rhezia, who had been forwarned by a vision of his arrival and believes fate will free her from Babekan, her detested bride-groom, while Scherasmin carries off Fatima. Now Oberon puts the constancy

of the lovers to the test. Soon afterwards they suffer shipwreck and Rhezia is captured by pirates, who sell her to the Emir of Tunis in whose hands Huon and Scherasmin had also fallen. As Rhezia withstands every temptation of the Emir, so Huon resists the voluptuous seduction of Roxana, the wife of the Emir. She accuses Huon to her husband and the lovers are sentenced to be burned alive at the same stake. Just as this is about to be carried into execution, they are rescued by Scherasmin by means of the magic horn. Oberon reconciled to his queen by the unshaken constancy of the lovers reappears, and transports them to the court of Charlemagne who now gives his blessing on the union of the severely tried pair.

Silvana.

Boland, the Rhinegraf of Sternberg, has murdered his brother, his mortal enemy. The castle of the latter is levelled to the ground and Boland believes that his brother's wife and child, a lovely girl, have also perished in the general destruction. But both have wonderfully escaped, and find a refuge in the house of Hatto, a collier, who lives in the midst of a forest. Here in the wilderness which surrounds her, Silvana grows up a lovely girl passing as the daughter of old sooty Hatto. In the meanwhile Gerold, the son of Count Boland, is roving restlessly through the woods. In one of his wanderings, he meets Silvana who has just had an interview with Dryada, a nymph of the forest, her powerful patroness. Dryada has revealed to the innocent girl the secret of love, when suddenly the young Count Gerold appears and both fall instantly in love. Now Hatto, the foster

father of Silvana, appears and seeing her in the arms of the noble stranger tries to persuade him that Silvana is only a sorceress, because he is afraid of losing her, the only joy of his old age. But his remonstrances are in vain. The count declares Silvana before his assembled suite to be his lawful bride and a merry feast takes place. Old Hatto who has partaken freely of the wine they offered him falls down drunk, and the Count carries off his lovely bride to present her to his father. In the second act Silvana is seen in the castle of the Count still in her former costume. Dryada, her tutelar genius, appears as an ugly old woman but suddenly changes to a beautiful youth.

Four waiting-maids enter to attire Silvana for the nuptial ceremony. In the next scene old Hatto is seen seeking in vain his beloved Silvana. The nuptial procession approaches, and Count Gerold presents his lovely bride to his father who is greatly struck on seeing her. Dryada, changed to a beautiful minstrel now appears, and by his song reveals the secret of the Count's life. The old count is so enraged, that he is about to rush upon the singer with a drawn sword, when suddenly Silvana, at the peril of her own life embraces the supposed minstrel. The whole assembly is greatly amazed and still more so by the appearance of Hatto, who claims Silvana as his child. In vain are the remonstrances of Gerold. Silvana, the minstrel, her supposed lover, and Hatto are thrown into a dreadful dungeon by the Count's order. In the third act the Count Boland appears in the dungeon. To his great surprise he is informed that the minstrel had disappeared and he declares Silvana a sorceress. Count Gerold enters, and as he is convinced, that Silvana is

innocent, he begs her forgiveness. He leaves her with the promise to do all in his power to free her. In the fourth act Silvana denounces herself as a sorceress before the assembled judges and is sentenced to be burnt alive. Just when the execution is going to take place the voice of the minstrel is heard. By his song he reveals to the wonder-stricken Count that Silvana is the daughter of his brother. Overcome with remorse and emotion, he sinks down on his knees and implores the forgiveness of Silvana. The union of the happy pair closes this charming opera.

Preciosa.

The scene of the first act is the house of a Spanish nobleman, Francisco de Carcamo, at Madrid. All Spain is speaking of a young gipsy whose beauty, virtue and talent have won for her the hearts of all. Barcamo and his friend Don Fernando de Azevedo are also desirous of making acquaintance with the girl, who has inflamed the heart of Alonzo, son of Don Francisco. The gipsies, Preciosa at their head, come to Carcamo's garden and with them a crowd of people. Dancing, improvisation and fortune telling now begins. The grace and beauty of Preciosa do not fail to make an impression on the hearts of the two gentlemen. In the second act the curtain rises on the camp of the gipsies in a wild forest. The whole band, including the captain and an old gipsy woman, Viarda, are under the irresistible influence of this charming girl. To this camp comes Alonzo who has followed the gipsies disguised as a hunter and who wishes to gain Preciosa. He is cordially received by all, and the

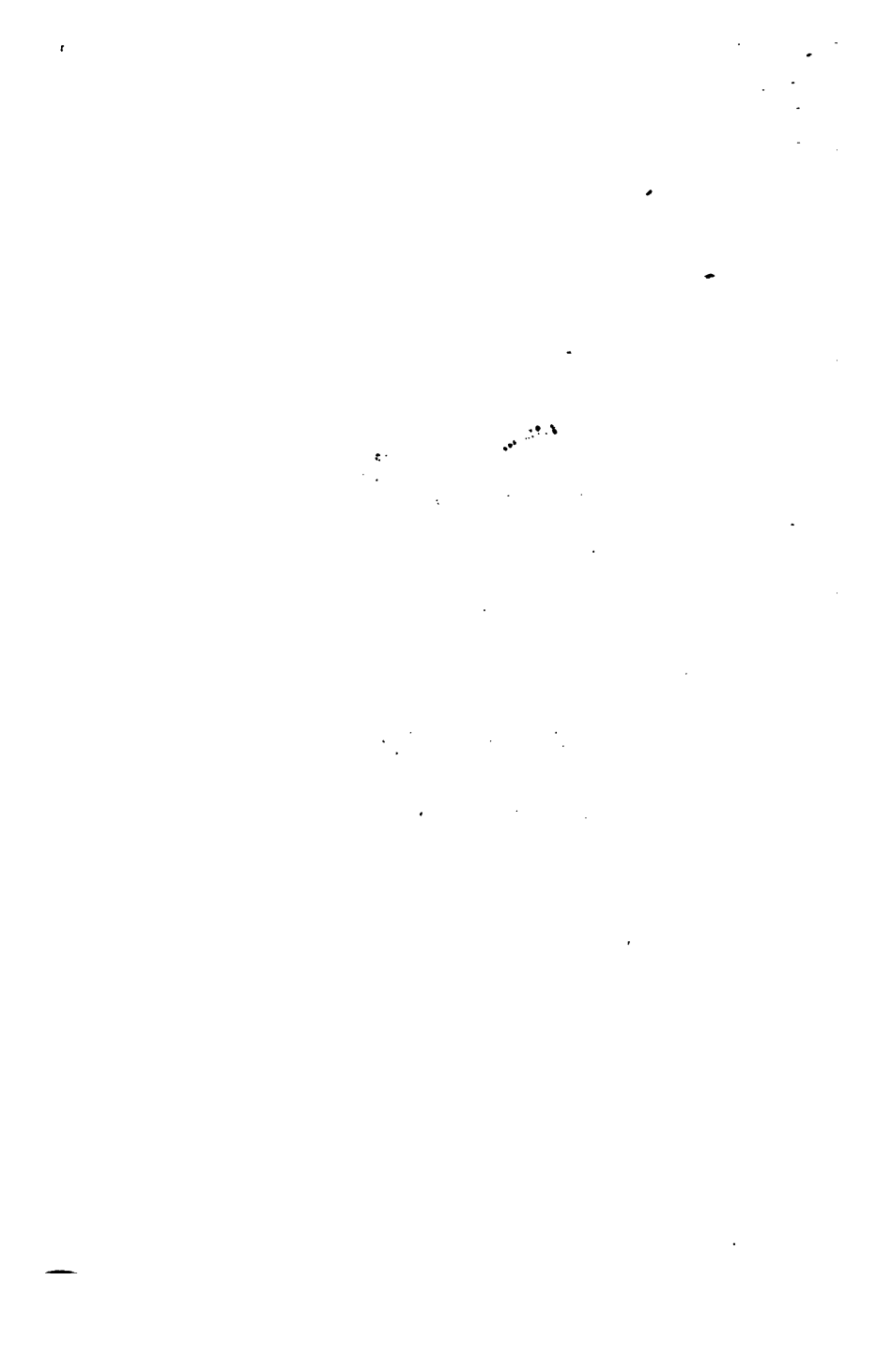
captain and his men swear not to reveal who the hunter is. The third act takes place near Valencia at the foot of the hill on which Don Azevedo's castle stands. Whilst the peasants are celebrating a wedding, the gipsies with Preciosa appear and along with them Alonzo dressed as a hunter. He jealously watches Preciosa and gets into a quarrel with Eugen, the son of Don Azevedo, who attempts carrying off Preciosa. The quarrel ends with the vanquishing of the insolent hunter who is taken prisoner. The other gipsies are driven away by Eugen's order. Preciosa however escapes from them. Compelled by the Captain, who carefully watches her to follow him, she takes Alonzo's rifle and drives him towards the castle thinking he could do her good service in the deliverance of her bride-groom. The fourth act takes place in the castle itself. Viarda, the old gipsy-mother, now appears to ask pardon for the Captain and Preciosa, and then discloses Alonzo's secret as she knows the kindly relation which exists between both houses, and demands a thousand gold-pieces but in return promises to leave the country for ever. Don Azevedo is about to grant her request, but the despair of Preciosa who must leave her bridegroom for ever moves Donna Clara so much that she persuades her husband to ransom her. As the gipsies refuse to do so, he threatens to keep Preciosa without their permission. Viarda now confesses that Preciosa is the daughter of Azevedo and Donna Clara, stolen by her when a child of three years and who was supposed to be drowned. The union of the lovers ends the opera.





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